



Hungry for gifts? Foodie finds, just in time | 18

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Weekend

DECEMBER 23, 2011 | A PUBLICATION OF *The Washington Post* | NEWS, ENTERTAINMENT, ARTS, LIFESTYLES | **FREE DAILY**



STALEMATE OVER

House GOP agrees to a deal preserving the payroll tax cut **3**

TROUBLING REVIEW

Army report finds thousands of Arlington grave-marker errors **9**

MASTER MANIPULATOR

Spielberg lays it on thick with his moving epic 'War Horse' **20**



FOR EXTENDED FORECAST, SEE PAGE 33



NBA SEASON PREVIEW

The Wizards' John Wall is expecting to win more games in his second season.

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER

IT'S BACK TO BUSINESS
AFTER LABOR STRIFE
NEARLY COST THE NBA
A SEASON **10**

GETTY IMAGES/EXPRESS ILLUSTRATION

eo

eye openers

BUTTERY SPREADS

We Say Again: It Was Norway

Authorities say a thief who slipped away with \$50,000 worth of margarine remains at large even though the truck that carried the payload has been recovered. The trailer was stolen Dec. 10 near Waterloo, Iowa. It was found Dec. 15 in Fowler, Mich. Waterloo police say the theft was the latest in a series of semitrailer thefts. Others included a trailer filled with beef jerky, one loaded with dog food and one carrying dental hygiene products. (AP)

IT'S ALL BAD

Tobacco of Any Kind Is Not Good for Santa

A Greenville, Pa., tobacco shop is turning the image of the jovial, pipe-smoking Santa on its head by having St. Nick huff on a hookah. Up in Smoke store manager Sue Stoyer says that customer reaction to the display has been mixed. But she notes that many early depictions of Santa Claus have him puffing on a pipe. (AP)

FAILURE TO NOTICE CAT

I THOUGHT Ira Glass Sounded Yowl-y Today

A cat has survived a four-hour, 200-mile ride under the hood of a car. A man who'd left Xenia, Ohio, on a drive to Cleveland on Sunday afternoon stopped at a rest area when he smelled something. A state trooper found the motorist with his hood up and a cat that wasn't his stuck in the engine compartment. A veterinarian at a nearby animal hospital said the cat will be fine. (AP)

The Big Picture



PAGING CHARLIE BROWN: Brandon Coughlin, of Benton City, Wash., snaps a photo of the "lonely Christmas weed" Tuesday in Kennewick, Wash. Locals added extra decorations and a Nativity scene to the weed that has sprouted from between the seams of concrete of a traffic island along the busy road. (AP)

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In Brief

RALEIGH, N.C.

Citing Illness, Edwards Requests to Delay Trial

In a motion filed Thursday, lawyers for former presidential candidate John Edwards say he has been diagnosed with a medical condition that would make it difficult for him to attend his Jan. 30 criminal trial over campaign finances and is asking for it to be delayed. (AP)

COLUMBIA, MO.

Wal-Mart Pulls Formula After Baby Dies in Mo.

Wal-Mart and health officials awaited tests Thursday on a batch of Enfamil Newborn formula with the lot number ZP1K7G that was removed from more than 3,000 stores nationwide after a Missouri newborn who consumed it died from a rare infection. (AP)

NEW YORK

Study Linking Chronic Fatigue, Virus Retracted

The journal Science is retracting a controversial 2009 report that linked chronic fatigue syndrome to a virus called XMRV after losing confidence in the research. Follow-up studies by other scientists found no evidence of such a link. (AP)

Holiday Schedule

Express will not publish Monday, due to the Christmas holiday.

House Agrees to Payroll Deal

After demands from Obama, Republicans agree to renew cuts

Washington

Their isolation complete, House Republicans on Thursday caved to demands by President Obama, congressional Democrats and fellow Republicans for a short-term renewal of payroll tax cuts for all workers.

After days of wrangling that even House Speaker John Boehner acknowledged "may not have been politically the smartest thing in the world," the Ohio Republican abruptly changed course and dropped demands for immediate holiday season talks with the Senate. The breakthrough probably spares workers a hit in their paychecks that would have kicked in Jan. 1.

Boehner said he expects both House and Senate to pass a new bill by Sunday that would renew the tax break while congressional negotiators work out a longer-term measure that would also extend jobless benefits for millions



HOUSE SPEAKER
JOHN BOEHNER

"I thank our members ... for their efforts to enact a full-year extension of the payroll tax cut for working families."



PRESIDENT
OBAMA

"I congratulate members of Congress for ending the partisan stalemate by reaching an agreement that meets that test."

of Americans and prevent doctors from absorbing a big cut in Medicare payments.

The developments were a clear win for Obama. The payroll tax cut was the centerpiece of his three-

month campaign-style drive for jobs legislation. The House and Senate could approve the legislation as early as Friday by voice votes.

The GOP retreat ends a tense standoff in which Boehner's House

Republicans came under great pressure to agree to the short-term extension passed by the Senate on Saturday. The speaker was open to the idea, But rank-and-file Republicans revolted and the House instead insisted on immediate talks.

Just hours before he announced the breakthrough, Boehner had made the case for a year-long extension.

But the top Republican in the Senate, Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, instead urged the House to accept the outlines of the Senate legislation. Resolve was crumbling among tea party-backed Republicans, too.

In competing news conferences and statements earlier, all sides sought to avoid blame should taxes go up Jan. 1, just as Americans begin paying holiday bills. House Republicans in particular were facing fire from GOP establishment figures incensed that they would risk losing the tax cut issue to Democrats at the dawn of the presidential and congressional election year. ANDREW TAYLOR AND LAURIE KELLMAN (AP)



It's a Boy: Former U.S. Rep. Anthony Weiner of New York is ending a rough year with some good news. A spokeswoman says the Democrat and his wife, Huma Abedin, welcomed son Jordan Zain Weiner on Wednesday. Weiner resigned from Congress in June amid outrage over sexually explicit emails and social media postings. Abedin is a top aide to Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton. Jordan is their first child. (AP)



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Nation

Economy Steadies Itself

Lowest jobless claims since 2008 show the market is improving

Washington

In the latest sign that the economy is surging at year's end, unemployment claims have dropped to the lowest level since April 2008, long before anyone realized that the nation was in a recession.

Claims fell by 4,000 last week to 364,000, the Labor Department said Thursday. It was the third-straight weekly drop. The four-week average of claims, a less volatile gauge, fell for the 11th time in 13 weeks and stands at the lowest since June 2008.

While the economy remains vulnerable to threats, particularly a recession in Europe, the steady improvement in the job market is unquestionable.

"The underlying trend is unde-

Stocks Close Higher on Job Market News

Encouraging economic reports pushed stocks higher Thursday. The Dow Jones industrial average rose 61.91 points. The S&P 500 index gained 10.28 points, and the Nasdaq composite index rose 21.48. Economists say the improving job market, strong holiday shopping and cheaper gas prices will leave consumers with more money to spend. That would get the economy growing at an annual rate of more than 3 percent in the final three months of this year, which would be the fastest pace since the 3.8 percent growth in the spring of 2010. (AP)

3.91%

The average rate this week on the 30-year fixed mortgage — from 3.94 percent the previous week — according to Freddie Mac on Thursday. (AP)

niably positive," said Jennifer Lee, senior economist with BMO Capital Markets. "I think everyone is starting to come around to the view that, yes, there is a recovery going on."

Unemployment claims are a sort of week-to-week EKG for the

job market. Except for a spike this spring, after the earthquake and tsunami in Japan hurt U.S. manufacturing, they have fallen steadily for a year and a half. Claims peaked at 659,000 in March 2009. In the four years before the Great Recession, they mostly stayed between 300,000 and 350,000.

"We haven't yet really seen substantial numbers of new jobs, but this is definitely an encouraging sign of what lies down the road," said Sam Bullard, an economist at Wells Fargo. DANIEL WAGNER AND MARTIN CRUTSINGER (AP)

Romney Campaign Gains Ground



MITT ROMNEY PUMPS DIESEL into his bus during a campaign stop Thursday in Randolph, N.H. Also on Thursday, former president George H.W. Bush unofficially endorsed the GOP presidential candidate in the Houston Chronicle, writing that he backs Romney because of his "stability, experience and principles."

Hearsay



"I regret my inappropriate comment, and I have sent a personal note to the first lady apologizing."

— **REP. JIM SENSENBRENNER, R-WIS.**, IN A STATEMENT THURSDAY AFTER HE WAS OVERHEARD REMARKING ON MICHELLE OBAMA'S "BIG BUTT" AND "LARGE POSTERIOR" ON WEDNESDAY.

\$500K

The amount of money comedian Stephen Colbert offered to pay, using his Colbert Super PAC, on Thursday to help subsidize South Carolina's first-in-the-South GOP presidential primary. (AP)

Winter Necessities



Enjoy them all at ZooLights! Beginning November 25, all of your favorite holiday activities are available at the Smithsonian's National Zoo. Everything from animated light displays, seasonal food and drink, live entertainment, holiday shopping, and, of course, exotic animals — both live and in lights. New in 2011 — an iceless eco-friendly skating rink!

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(Friday through Sunday nights)

December 16-January 1

(Every night except December 24, 25, and 31)

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16 Blasts Tear Through Baghdad

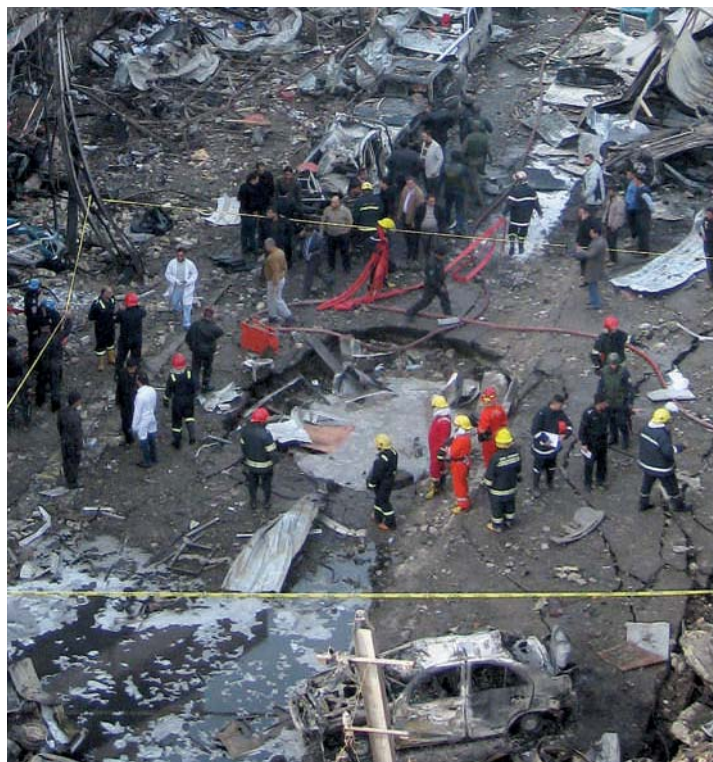
Bombings kill 69, injure nearly 200 in mostly Shiite areas

Baghdad

A terrifying wave of bombs tore through mostly Shiite neighborhoods of Baghdad on Thursday, killing at least 69 people and evoking fears that Iraq could dissolve into a new round of sectarian violence now that American troops have left.

The attacks appeared to be a well-coordinated assault by Sunni militants linked to al-Qaeda and targeted markets, grocery stores, cafes and government buildings in a dozen neighborhoods. They coincided with a government crisis that has already strained ties between the two sects to the breaking point.

For many Iraqis, this could be the beginning of a nightmare scenario: The fragile alliance in the governing coalition is collapsing, large-scale violence bearing the hallmarks of al-Qaeda has



Baghdad's deadliest attack on Thursday occurred in the Karrada neighborhood, where a suicide bomber driving an explosives-laden ambulance blew himself up outside a government office. Police said the man told guards that he needed to get to a nearby hospital. He then drove to the building, where he blew himself up, police said, leaving a 5-yard-wide crater. (AP)

A Time of Anxiety

Thursday's attacks ratchet up tensions at a time when many Iraqis are deeply worried about security. The real test of whether sectarian warfare returns, however, will be whether Shiite militants return to the type of attacks seen at the height of sectarian warfare in 2006-07. U.S. military officials have worried about a resurgence of al-Qaeda after their departure; the last U.S. troops left Iraq on Sunday. (AP)

returned, and Shiite Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki may be moving to grab the already limited power of the minority Sunnis.

The developments raise the specter of a return to the Sunni-Shiite sectarian bloodshed that pushed Iraq to the brink of civil war in 2006 and 2007.

At least 16 blasts went off across Baghdad, killing 69 people and wounding nearly 200 more. Most exploded in the morning, but at least two struck Thursday evening.

QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA (AP)

In Brief

BEIRUT

Monitors Arrive in Syria To Observe Crackdown

An advance team for the Arab League observers arrived in Damascus on Thursday under a plan aimed at ending President Bashar Assad's nine-month crackdown. Meanwhile, Syria's state-run news agency said more than 2,000 soldiers and security force members have been killed in the past nine months. (AP)

LAGOS, NIGERIA

Official: Major Oil Spill Is Area's Worst in 10 Years

An oil spill near the coast of Nigeria is likely the worst to hit those waters in a decade, a government official said Thursday, as slicks from the Royal Dutch Shell PLC spill approached the shoreline. Shell estimates the spill likely was less than 1.68 million gallons. (AP)

CAIRO

PM Urges Calm, Seeking Dialogue About Crisis

Egypt's military-appointed prime minister, Kamal el-Ganzouri, on Thursday called for national dialogue to resolve the country's political crisis and pleaded for a two-month calm to restore security after weeks of protests. (AP)

Officials: Mistakes Led NATO to Attack Pakistanis

Kabul, Afghanistan

An investigation into a NATO attack that killed 24 Pakistani troops last month near the Afghan border has concluded that a combination of mistrust and bad maps led to the airstrikes on two Pakistani outposts, the U.S. Department of Defense and a NATO official said on Thursday.

It's unclear whether the report, which said that mistakes were made by both sides, will reduce the tension between Pakistan and the U.S. over the incident. Pakistan has claimed the attack was a deliber-

Backstory

The Nov. 26 incident occurred after a joint U.S.-Afghan unit on the Afghan side of the border came under fire, a NATO official said. The unit tried to determine that the fire wasn't coming from anywhere near Pakistani positions, the official said, but "mistakes were made." They then called in airstrikes that killed 24 Pakistani troops. Furious, Islamabad has shut down NATO supply routes to Afghanistan and threw the U.S. out of its air base in southwestern Baluchistan province. (AP)

ate act of aggression.

A statement Thursday from the Department of Defense did not apologize, as Islamabad has demanded. The Defense Department said that the inquiry found U.S. forces — given what information they had available to them at the time — reacted in self-defense and with appropriate force.

"We have a lot of work to do to improve coordination, and we've already implemented steps to do that," a NATO official said.

Neither Pakistani nor Afghan officials immediately responded to requests for comment. (AP)



HISTORY

National Treasure Hunt for Greeks

As two years of austerity wear on, Greeks are increasingly finding solace in tales of buried riches. Legal hunts, which require permits and official oversight, have been carried out in Greece in recent years. One amateur gold hunter said at least 10 illegal attempts have been made to dig up gold near Grevena, including a 49-foot tunnel into a hill, the effort of five men arrested days ago. (AP)

Hearsay



"Conspiracies are being hatched to pack up the elected government."

— **YOUSUF RAZA GILANI**, PAKISTAN'S PRIME MINISTER, CLAIMING THURSDAY THERE ARE EFFORTS TO OUST THE COUNTRY'S CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT, A SIGN OF GROWING TENSION OVER A SUPPOSEDLY PLOTTED MILITARY COUP THIS YEAR.

\$940M The winnings for the town of Granen, Spain, awarded Thursday in the country's famed Christmas Lottery, in which people chip in and share tickets, making it common for multiple prizes to go to one town. The "El Gordo" lottery is ranked as the world's richest for the total sum paid out. (AP)



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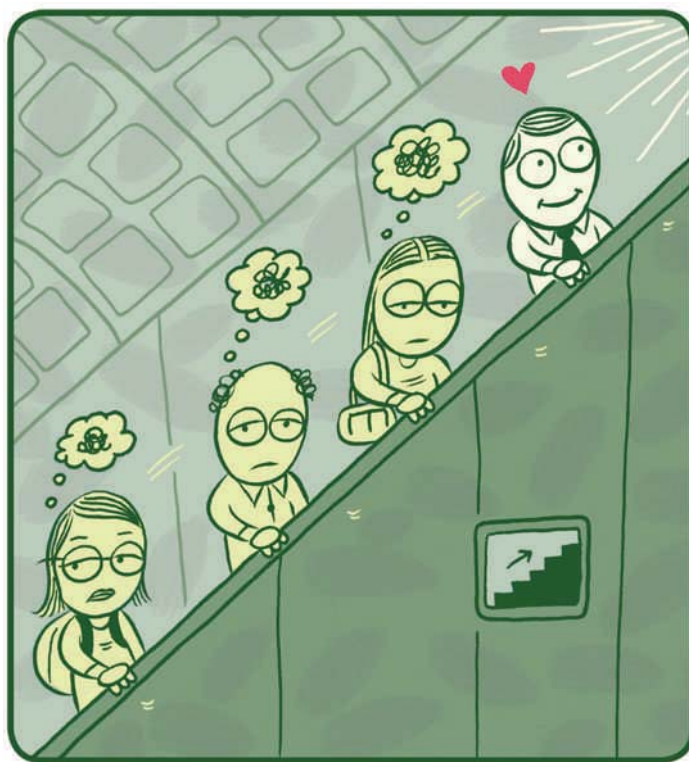
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"Pulse," meant to evoke a river as an homage to Admiral Farragut, is already partially installed. But just wait until lights start shining on the piece, made of a material called Sensitile. It should shimmer and change in appearance as you walk by or ride down the escalator to the Metro.



By Vicky Hallett

Leona Agourdis, executive director of the Golden Triangle Business Improvement District, shed some light on why the group's been pushing these three projects (in collaboration with the D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities, WMATA and the D.C. Department of Transportation). "It gives people an unexpected surprise and something pretty to look at during a routine experience," she says. Plus, those two Metro stations are particularly dim.

Turning on the lights has been harder than just flipping a switch. For the Sirvet sculpture, which was funded by the Golden Triangle BID and the arts commission, the design had to be tweaked repeatedly to hew to a laundry list of regulations. The piece had to stop four inches from the wall, be above a certain height and be incredibly durable. "Materials have to have a life cycle of 50 years," notes Michael McBride, Metro's Art in Transit program manager.

It was more back-and-forth than Sirvet, who's done installations in Malta, Dubai and Chicago this year (and designed Michael Jordan's dining room table), had ever experienced on a project. But he'd gladly sign up again. "I create art for a living, but you want people to see your work. This is a piece that's seen," he says.

And it'll make your holidays — and regular days — merry and bright.

Glow Sticking

Between the burning candles on menorahs and the zillions of trees tricked out with strands of blinking lights, Washington's all aglow this time of year. But when the holidays are over, don't expect it to get dark downtown: Several new projects that you might have mistaken for seasonal displays along your commute are actually here to stay.

For a month, riders at the Farragut West Metro station have been getting acquainted with "Farragut Spheres," by Washington artist Michael Enn Sirvet. It's an installation of 20 aluminum bowls riddled with 139,847 holes that allow the light from orange and yellow LEDs to pour through. (Sirvet is known for hole-y sculpture, not holy scripture.) If you thought eight nights was a miracle, try 10 whole years. That's how long the LEDs are expected to shine before

they need to be replaced.

You might also be confused by the light show that started last week on Connecticut Avenue. The constantly color-changing glow that hits the strip of trees and plants on the median between L and K streets is the first part of a grand year-round, years-long plan. Eventually, the landscaping and lights will extend all the way to Dupont Circle.

More lights will turn on in the new year at the Farragut North Metro stop. Artist Jefre Manuel's



"It gives people an unexpected surprise and something pretty to look at during a routine experience."

— LEONA AGOURDIS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

In Brief



SAUL LOEB/AP/GETTY IMAGES

Engineers rappel while inspecting the Washington Monument on Sept. 28.

WASHINGTON

Report Details Damage To Washington Monument

A new report on the earthquake-damaged Washington Monument details extensive cracking and chipped stones on the top portion of the 127-year-old structure. The report released Thursday suggests the monument is highly vulnerable to rainfall, with standing water collecting on the upper floors during storms. The report was prepared by the engineering company whose employees rappelled down the sides of the monument in September to inspect the damage. (AP)

CHANTILLY, VA.

Man Tries to Smuggle \$300K of Heroin at Dulles

A Pennsylvania man returning to Washington Dulles International Airport is charged with attempting to smuggle more than \$300,000 worth of heroin into the United States, hiding the drugs in soccer clothes and a banner. The Washington Examiner reports charges have been filed in federal court in Alexandria against Elias Casiano Jr., who flew into Dulles from Bolivia on Saturday. (AP)

WASHINGTON

D.C. Council Weighs Same-Sex Divorce Bill

A bill tackling divorce for same-sex couples who marry in D.C. but want to divorce in another state has quietly garnered support from a majority of D.C. Council members. The Civil Marriage Dissolution Equality Amendment Act of 2011 was introduced by Phil Mendelson, D-At Large, and co-sponsored by eight of 13 members. (THE WASHINGTON POST)

Poll: Low Marks for Gray, Council

More than half of D.C. voters disapprove of job mayor has done

Washington

D.C. Mayor Vincent C. Gray continues to get low marks for his handling of the city and would be handily defeated for re-election by either of the city's two most recent former mayors, according to a new poll.

The poll, conducted by Clarus Research Group, shows more than half of District voters do not approve of the job Gray is doing. Although Gray's standing has

ticked up slightly since a Clarus survey in March, just 34 percent of voters approve of his performance.

The survey paints a bleak picture for both the first-year mayor and the D.C. Council as they battle several ethical controversies and federal investigations.

Only 30 percent of voters approve of the council, and 55 percent have a negative view, a reversal of the body's ratings since a previous Clarus survey in March.

A little more than a year ago, Gray handily defeated then-Mayor Adrian Fenty after receiving nearly 60 percent of the vote in the September 2010 Democratic primary.

"The mayor's first year in office has been a political disaster."

— RON FAUCHEUX, CLARUS PRESIDENT

But if District Democrats today were asked to choose between Gray and Fenty, the former mayor would defeat the incumbent by 15 percentage points.

Fenty's 48 percent to 33 percent margin among Democrats grows to 21 percent when non-Democrats are included in the survey, according to the poll.

TIM CRAIG (THE WASHINGTON POST)

Meanwhile ...



Heading into his second year in office, Mayor Vincent Gray remains stronger politically than D.C. Council

Chairman Kwame R. Brown, left, a Democrat, and the rest of D.C.'s legislative body. Only 23 percent of D.C. voters approve of Brown's job performance, compared to 57 who disapprove. Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton, who is up for re-election in 2012, has a 77 percent approval rating, nearly equal to Police Chief Cathy Lanier's 78 percent rating. (TWP)

washingtonpost.com



MATT MCCLINTON/TWP

TEACHER MELANIE HOLMES instructs in a sixth-grade English language arts class at the See Forever Foundation & Maya Angelou Public Charter School on Dec. 15. Charter schools, independently operated but taxpayer-funded, serve 41 percent of the city's 78K public students, up from 5 percent in 1998. The D.C. Public Charter School Board, which authorizes and revokes charters, on Dec. 6 unveiled a three-tier performance ranking based on test score growth and other factors. | **postlocal.com**

Army: Mistakes On 64K Graves At Arlington

Arlington

Thousands of grave markers at Arlington National Cemetery may need to be replaced or added to accurately account for the dead, following a meticulous Army review of each of the nearly 260,000 headstones and niche covers on the grounds.

In a report to Congress Thursday, the Army found potential discrepancies between headstones and cemetery paperwork on about 64,000 grave markers.

Congress ordered the review last year after reports of misidentified and misplaced graves that led to the ouster of the cemetery's top executives. (AP)

The Lotteries

Thursday, Dec. 22

Maryland

Mid-day Pick 3 2-1-8
Evening Pick 3 (Wed.) 8-2-7
Mid-day Pick 4 1-4-3-6
Evening Pick 4 (Wed.) 9-1-0-1
Match 5 (Wed.) 16-21-32-34-35 (27)
Multi-Match (Mon.) 18-27-28-30-38-39

District

Mid-day Lucky Numbers 7-5-4
Evening Lucky Numbers (Wed.) 5-6-7
Mid-day DC 4 5-8-8-7
Evening DC 4 (Wed.) 9-2-3-9
Mid-day D.C. Five 8-1-1-6-8
Evening D.C. Five (Wed.) 6-9-0-8-4
Hot Lotto (Wed.) 20-22-29-33-39 (2)

Virginia

Mid-day Pick 3 3-7-7
Evening Pick 3 (Wed.) 3-1-8
Mid-day Pick 4 0-2-4-0
Evening Pick 4 (Wed.) 4-4-2-8
Mid-day Cash 5 1-6-7-10-25
Evening Cash 5 (Wed.) 6-8-17-28-33
Win For Life (Wed.) 3-17-26-28-33-34 (15)

Multi-State Games

Power Play 20-24-27-45-51 (31)
Powerball 4X

All winning numbers are official only when validated at a lottery ticket location or a lottery claims office. Drawings that occur after Express' deadline will be published two days later.

NBA Preview

5 Must-See Games



Jan. 6

New York: Melo, A'mare and new acquisition Tyson Chandler have made the Knicks relevant again.



Jan. 18

Oklahoma City: The Thunder is arguably the league's most exciting team. It could be a sleeper Finals selection.



Feb. 4

L.A. Clippers: Chris Paul teaming up with Blake Griffin, above, equals Lob City in L.A.



Feb. 10

Miami: So the Big 3 didn't win it all last year, but don't expect the circus to be any less entertaining this year.



March 7

L.A. Lakers: Strange as it may seem, Kobe and co. are getting usurped in their own backyard.



Color me glad

While it may not be the long-desired return of the Bullets, team owner Ted Leonsis did make fans happy with a nod to the good ol' days, giving the Wizards a new red, white and blue color scheme and D.C.-oriented logos, and consigning their abstract Wizard mark to tertiary status. As with the Capitals — also owned by Leonsis — red is now a key color in both the unis and the Verizon Center floor, and the players seemed to be pleased with the changes. “I like the new jerseys,” forward Andray Blatche said. “It’s more energetic. I think the fans will like it.” Wizards guard **John Wall** said the new look fits in with the team’s new attitude. “I like the new colors,” he said. “If you’re rebuilding, it’s great to have new colors to start with.” E.S.

The Wizards

John Wall rode into Washington as the No. 1 draft pick and immediately won over the Wizards’ jaded fan base, throwing himself into a promising rookie campaign even as the team stumbled to another disappointing season.



7 P.M.
Dec. 26 | CSN



Now the soft-spoken guard from Kentucky hopes to follow the path of another star point guard, the Chicago Bulls’ Derrick Rose, who took a big step forward in his second year before exploding with an MVP campaign in his third year as the linchpin of a playoff contender.

To that end, Wall went on a barnstorming tour during the lockout, seemingly taking on — and dominating — all comers, as verified by the mixtapes of

his breathtaking dunks and passes that sprouted up all over the Web.

But the reality is that Wall is shepherding a 23-win team, and all eyes will be on him as the Wizards make their long climb to respectability. He says he’s ready for the challenge as the Wizards prepare for their season opener on Monday against the New Jersey Nets.

“I’m approaching [this season] totally different,” Wall said. “I know what it takes to win, what it takes to prepare for the game, how to eat, how to rest my body, all the things to prepare for the season.”

If there was one flaw in Wall’s game last season, when he averaged 16.4 points and 8.3 assists, it was his outside shooting. So he spent a large portion of the lockout simply firing up shots. “I’ve become a better shooter,” he said. “I know when to shoot the ball. Last year, I was hesitating if I was open, but now I’m going to shoot. If I miss, I’m going to have the same confidence in my next shot.”

That kind of leadership quality has endeared Wall to his boss, Wizards owner Ted Leonsis, who gushed that he “loved” Wall during the team’s media day last week. “Part of his development is going from being a gracious young person to a person who isn’t afraid to take over,” Leonsis said. “He understands this is his team.”

Wall was hampered by a lingering left foot injury for the second half of the season, but Wizards coach Flip Saunders said Wall is at 100 percent, and it shows. “He’s much stronger, and his athleticism is back,” Saunders said. “He’s just been dunking on people. He’s a lot more explosive.”

Wall is aware that for all the highlight-reel moments, his true worth will be defined by wins, and he’s eager to carry the Wizards to seemingly unthinkable territory — the postseason.

“It’s no fun if you’re not playing in the playoffs,” he said. ELLIOTT SMITH

Wizards aim to make the jump to respectability in Wall’s second season

LEAP YEAR

“I’m approaching [this season] totally different. I know what it takes to win, what it takes to prepare for the game, how to eat, how to rest my body, all the things to prepare for the season.”

— **JOHN WALL**, WHO FOCUSED ON BETTER CONDITIONING IN THE OFF-SEASON AFTER HE STRUGGLED WITH INJURIES IN AN OTHERWISE SUCCESSFUL ROOKIE CAMPAIGN WITH THE WIZARDS LAST YEAR.

NBA Preview



1 Effects of the lockout

The condensed, 66-game schedule induced by the lockout will test teams on a nightly basis. Shorter rest and regeneration periods and more games on back-to-back nights will take their toll, and deeper, more athletic teams should benefit from that. The frenzied free agency period also saw multiple high-profile and key role players switch teams with little time to get acclimated to their new surroundings and teammates. Needless to say, a transition period is to be expected.

2011-2012 NBA SEASON

5 STORIES TO WATCH

After nearly a losing the season to labor strife, the NBA finally gets back to games on Christmas Day

In between the Mavericks' party in Miami and the Chris Paul celebration in Los Angeles, business got in the way of basketball. The lockout came 2½ weeks after the NBA finals and lasted five months, leaving nobody certain when players and owners would settle so Dallas could begin defending its title — or LeBron James could resume chasing his first. In the end, a 66-game schedule was saved, starting with five games on Christmas — including a rematch of the finals — featuring the kind of story lines that made last season so memorable. Here are the top stories to watch. AVI CREDITOR/(AP)

5 Last chance for the Celtics

This could very well be the last year of the latest Big 3 era in Boston, as Paul Pierce's running mates Kevin Garnett and Ray Allen both have their contracts expire at the end of the season. With limited roster flexibility and former Georgetown star Jeff Green ruled out for the year after a physical revealed a heart condition, the onus falls on the aging trio and point guard Rajon Rondo, right — the subject of preseason trade rumors — to carry the load through a rigorous schedule and an improved Eastern Conference.



GETTY IMAGES PHOTOS

2 Can the new-look Mavs defend their title?

For a defending champion, the Dallas Mavericks made a whole lot of personnel changes. Sure, key components Dirk Nowitzki, Jason Kidd, Jason Terry and Shawn Marion are still in place, but center Tyson Chandler and high-energy guard J.J. Barea are out, and the two of them had plenty to do with the Mavs' capturing last year's title. Owner Mark Cuban went out and got Lamar Odom, above, and Vince Carter, among others, to fill the void, but the dynamic in Big D is sure to be different than it was a year ago.



3 The Heat is on

The train wreck that was "The Decision" is 18 months in the rearview mirror, and after the Heat fell short of expectations in last June's NBA finals, LeBron James, Dwyane Wade & co. experienced something new: tranquility. Miami has quietly gone about its business and stayed out of the spotlight while smartly adding role player extraordinaire Shane Battier to its star-studded core. It's championship or bust once again in South Beach, and the Heat is a year more mature, cohesive and better equipped for a title run this time around.

4 Clippers ready for Los Angeles limelight

Is there a changing of the guard in Los Angeles? The Lakers offloaded the versatile Odom, lost iconic coach Phil Jackson to retirement and swapped out Ron Artest for Metta World Peace. Kobe Bryant is a year older, just tore a wrist ligament and is dealing with a weakened supporting cast along with a divorce. The Clippers, meanwhile, swept the Lakers in their pre-season doubleheader and have the look of an exciting team on the rise after acquiring stud point guard Chris Paul, right, to be the alley to the explosive Blake Griffin's oop. There's excitement bound for the Staples Center, but not necessarily from the team wearing purple and gold.



A special offer from The Washington Post and Georgetown University



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The Washington Post

If you don't get it, you don't get it.

sports

Forget Christmas — it's time to look forward to another Strasmas | 14



TV Lineup



Tony Romo is on a roll as the Cowboys host the Eagles in a big game Saturday.

Friday

7 P.M. The Capitals play their last game before the holiday when visiting the New Jersey Devils. CSN

9 P.M. Baylor and West Virginia tip off in a nonconference basketball game in Las Vegas. ESPN

Saturday

1 P.M. The Redskins play a team that's worse than it is: the Minnesota Vikings. Fox

1 P.M. The Ravens look to rebound from a terrible showing when facing the Cleveland Browns. CBS

4:15 P.M. In a game with major ramifications in the NFC East race, the Cowboys take on the Eagles. Fox

8 P.M. Southern Mississippi battles Nevada in the Hawaii Bowl. ESPN

Sunday

NOON The NBA season tips off with the New York Knicks hosting the Boston Celtics. TNT

2:30 P.M. In a rematch of the NBA Finals, the Dallas Mavericks play the Miami Heat. ABC

5:15 P.M. The injured Kobe Bryant may miss the Los Angeles Lakers' opener against Derrick Rose and the Chicago Bulls. ABC

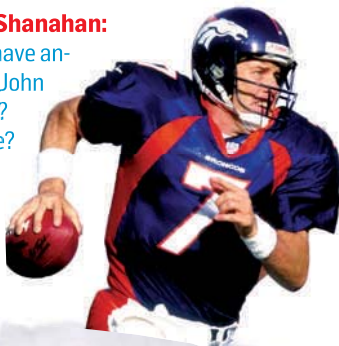
8 P.M. The Packers try to get back in the win column against the Bears. NBC

10:30 P.M. Chris Paul debuts with the Los Angeles Clippers against Mark Jackson's Golden State Warriors. ESPN



Dan Snyder: For grumpy newspaper reporters to stop saying mean things about me.

Mike Shanahan: Can I have another John Elway? Please?



John Beck: Twelve more shirts with "John" on the front. Those are awesome!

Kyle Shanahan: Just let my dad hold on a couple of years — I need a job.

Rex Grossman: LASIK eye surgery would really help me avoid those pesky interceptions.



London Fletcher: Some more of that Fountain of Youth cologne. It really works!

Ryan Torain and Tim Hightower: We want to jump off the Shanahan RB carousel.

DeAngelo Hall: Fourteen more games against Eli Manning.



Roy Helu: Phonetics lessons for all reporters and broadcasters who can't say "Helu" correctly.

Anthony Armstrong: Can you let Coach know I'm still on the team?



Sav Rocca: Bengay. Lots of it. My leg hurts from kicking all the time.



Santana Moss: Just one season with a decent QB.



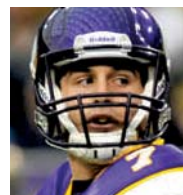
Trent Williams and Fred Davis: Fritos, Funyuns, Fiddle Faddle and Frosted Flakes

Dear Santa...

What some of the Redskins are asking for this Christmas

Thanks to some crack investigative work and a key source at the North Pole, we were able to get our hands on the Christmas wish lists the Redskins sent to Santa Claus. As you can imagine, there are some pretty reasonable (and totally accurate) requests on there. Let's check out what the Redskins hope to find under their trees Sunday after Saturday's game against the Minnesota Vikings. ELLIOTT SMITH

3 Things To Watch



1 Ghost of Xmas Future: Potential franchise QB Christian Ponder is laboring through an awful season for the Vikings, perhaps giving pause to the Redskins' signal-caller search.



2 Naughty or nice: For one of the few times this season, the Redskins are the favored team. Can they play like a team that's supposed to take care of business?



3 Lump of coal: DE Jared Allen is the one Viking who hasn't stopped playing hard. The Redskins' O-line has it work cut out for itself to deserve a nice present. E.S.

sports

Will Grossman Be Turned Over?



The Redskins

Rex Grossman has thrown at least one interception in 10-straight starts, which means he's spent 10-straight starts having to explain what happened — and then shaking it off.

"It may stick in the papers afterwards," he said this week, "but it doesn't really stick in my head."

The Redskins quarterback can shrug off a bad play as well as anybody. The problem for him is that he constantly has to do it. Last week's win over the New York Giants was a prime example: He threw interceptions on two of the first three possessions yet bounced back to



Giving It Away

For the season, Rex Grossman has given the ball away 22 times — 18 interceptions and four lost fumbles — which ties him for the NFL lead with Philip Rivers of the San Diego Chargers. One of Grossman's best shots for a turnover-free game comes Saturday when the Redskins host the Minnesota Vikings (2-12), who have lost six straight and haven't picked off a pass in nine games. (AP)

lead a 13-point victory.

The play of the quarterbacks was always going to be an over-riding Redskins theme this year, from the moment coach Mike Shanahan decided to go with the tandem of Grossman and John Beck. Beck proved not to be the answer in three midseason starts, while Grossman has lived up to his Good Rex-Bad Rex reputation, with both

extremes often appearing in the same game.

Come the end of the season, the Redskins will have to decide whether they want Grossman back, perhaps to mentor a quarterback taken in the first round of the draft.

The competition for a top QB got a bit more complicated Thursday when Matt Barkley announced he was staying at Southern Cali-

fornia for another year.

If Grossman does come back, the Redskins want him to somehow, some way cut down on the turn-

58

The number of interceptions that Rex Grossman has thrown in his career, versus 53 touchdowns. (AP)

overs — regardless of whether he disrupt his psyche. "One thing I know is Rex has done a decent job," offensive coordinator Kyle Shanahan said. "He has way too many turnovers, which is not acceptable. I know not all of them are him. I think you can help around him better. I can do better to help out him not having so many picks, but he definitely needs to get that down. But Rex has done some real good things in these past few weeks." JOSEPH WHITE (AP)

Swengali

'Tis the Season for Optimism in D.C.

Regular Swengali readers know I'm ready to forget about the past year in sports. So let's look ahead to what promises to be a year to remember, at least in D.C.

The biggest event of 2012 may very well involve the Nationals. Yes, you read that right.

Forget Opening Day, when the Nats will be at Wrigley Field. The home opener — with, hopefully, Stephen Strasburg on the mound — should be something special. If Strasburg and fellow ace Jordan Zimmermann stay healthy, the Nats could finish with a winning record despite their lackluster offseason. Hey, around here, anything above .500 is a big deal.

The Nats could finish with a winning record despite their lackluster offseason.

The biggest news in 2012 will likely, as usual, come out of Redskins Park. It's safe to say Rex Grossman has played his way into another year in Washington, but he hasn't been good enough to keep Mike Shanahan from taking a quarterback with a first-round draft pick. After Heath Shuler, Patrick Ramsey and Jason Campbell didn't work out, maybe the Redskins are due to get a quarterback right with a top pick.

Not to be outdone, what are the Capitals going to do if Alex Ovechkin has a second-straight down year? Probably nothing rash (yet), and we hope the old Ovie makes only the rare appearance.

There's plenty to look forward to in 2012, and, at least now, optimism is appropriate.

To reach Matt Swenson, e-mail matt.swenson@readexpress.com

In Brief

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Barkley Bypasses Draft To Remain With Trojans



Barkley

Southern Cal quarterback Matt Barkley has decided to return for his senior season and put off the NFL for another year. With coach Lane Kiffin and his family in attendance, Barkley announced Thursday that while he feels prepared for the NFL, he has unfinished business with the Trojans. (AP)

THE NATIONALS

Nats Near Deal for A's Ace

Left-hander Gio Gonzalez confirmed on Thursday that the Nationals have agreed to acquire him in a trade with the Oakland Athletics, pending a physical and the deal's being finalized. The 26-year-old All-Star went 16-12 last season with a 3.12 ERA. The Nats will give up four players, including prized prospect Brad Peacock, in the deal. (AP)

Sunday Pick'Em

Matt Swenson
SPORTS EDITOR,
EXPRESS

Clinton Yates
LUNCHLINE,
EXPRESS

Chris Williams
BAR MANAGER,
PUBLIC BAR

Arnie Applebaum
GENERAL MANAGER,
EXPRESS



VIKINGS (PLUS 6.5) AT REDSKINS

VIKINGS

Do the Redskins dare tank it to help their draft pick?

VIKINGS

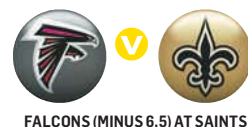
You, Donovan McNabb and I will be the only people watching this game Saturday.

REDSKINS

Christian ponders what the grass of FedEx Field smells like early and often.

REDSKINS

If Rex throws less than three INTs, the Redskins should win.



FALCONS (MINUS 6.5) AT SAINTS

SAINTS

The Falcons are on a roll, but nobody is beating the Saints right now.

FALCONS

Matt Ryan and Julio Jones will be too much to handle for the Saints' 28th-ranked passing defense.

SAINTS

Drew Brees makes the Superdome a House of T-Pain: All he does is win no matter what.

SAINTS

Note to Redskins: Great QBs can be found in later rounds, too.



CHARGERS (PLUS 1.5) AT LIONS

LIONS

Two teams desperate for a win. Let's go with the home squad.

CHARGERS

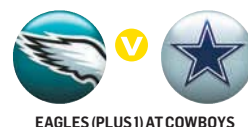
The Lions, although good, are a complete fraud when it comes to playing good teams.

CHARGERS

Ndamukong Suh will get a personal foul at the pregame coin toss.

CHARGERS

December — aka, the month of Norv.



EAGLES (PLUS 1) AT COWBOYS

EAGLES

If only to keep the NFC East chaos going for another week.

EAGLES

I took the Eagles to win the Super Bowl before the season, so I have to pick them.

EAGLES

Next year, Jerry Jones will be Dallas' owner, GM, coach, offensive coordinator and QB.

COWBOYS

Lord willing, the Cowboys win the division and are humiliated in the first round. Amen.



GIANTS (PLUS 2.5) AT JETS

J-E-T-S

If only to keep the NFC East chaos going for another week.

J-E-T-S

It's possible that both guys coaching could lose their jobs after this year.

GIANTS

The Battle of New York Teams That Play in New Jersey will be a shootout. I'll take Manning.

J-E-T-S

After seeing last week's game, I may never be able to pick the Giants again.

Season Tally: Public Bar, 41-24; Matt Swenson, 39-26; Clinton Yates, 36-29; Dan Steinberg, 35-30; Arnie Applebaum, 33-32

lookout

weekend 12.23.11



Dreaming of a White House Christmas

Find out how first ladies pull off the holiday hoopla **19**

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face**time**



PAUL MORIGI PHOTOGRAPHY

Joseph Abboud

DESIGNER, MEN'S FASHION GURU

He's directed menswear design at Ralph Lauren and launched his first collection decades ago. Now, HMX Group president and chief creative officer Joseph Abboud opens his latest venture, Streets of Georgetown (1254 Wisconsin Ave.; 202-295-9098), one of two flagship stores in the U.S. We chatted with the 61-year-old fashion vet about Streets' take on our hometown style.

Why did you zero in on Georgetown?

We love the charm of Georgetown. There are areas around the country that have that charm, like Back Bay in Boston, San Francisco. We aren't mall-driven. If you look at our name, we want to be on the important streets in important cities.

You also have a Streets store near L.A.

Yes, we opened a small Streets store in Beverly Hills. That is Streets of Beverly Hills. We're working on a store in Chicago for March of next year. We have our eye on Boston.

No New York?

We love New York, but we don't think New York has to be the center of the universe. We think America is very diverse. If we had a concept that would work better in New York, of course we'd do that. We think this is a great concept that isn't just Streets of Georgetown; it's Streets of London, it's Streets of Bombay. The great part about this, no pun intended, we can tailor each one of our stores. We want to be part of that community.

What kind of guys are you looking to come to your store?

Whether you're 22 or 62, it's really about a style that fits you. We're not saying, "Oh, we want the young, hip, cool guy." We want him. But we want the hip, cool guy who might be in his 40s or his 50s. It's more psychographic than demographic.

"I think what men most need advice about is what's appropriate, and that's flexible for how you live life."

You've got other irons in the fire. What's going on with your collaboration with Russell Simmons Argyle Culture?

Russell is an amazing, marketing savvy, tasteful guy. He came to us and asked if we would collaborate with him. We've spent a lot of time together. It's a very inclusive brand. This is for everyone. It's a spirited, preppy cool thing. We're thrilled to be doing it. That's probably not going to debut until fall '12.

Any advice for fellas on holiday attire and tuxes?

There's still nothing more beautiful than a really well-tailored tux. Just in that you could do a vested tux, a cashmere dinner jacket or a double-breasted tux. I still love black for evening. I think what men most need advice about is what's appropriate, and that's flexible for how you live life.

No ugly Christmas sweaters?

No! The big X for me is Christmas sweaters with a big Santa on them and no big Christmas ties. None of that. KRIS CORONADO

Event Horizon | Sing With the Pros

There's nothing like a little light (classical) music to get you in the Christmas spirit. Skip "Jingle Bells" and join the Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra and its 200-voice choir in a sing-along of Handel's "Messiah." Free tickets are distributed at 6 p.m. in the Hall of Nations. (Kennedy Center, 2700 F St. NW; 8 p.m., free; 202-467-4600)

2

Turkish Delights

CHEAP RED FELT won't cut it when you need to stuff a stocking with artisanal whiskey and hand-cured reindeer jerky. These sturdy, footwear-inspired gift receptacles, from Timothy Paul Home (\$42 each, 1529A 14th St. NW; 202-234-2020), are made from vintage textiles from Turkey, India and other non-U.S. locales. They're attractive enough to leave hanging after the holidays. Just say they're oven mitts that are too pretty to use.



3 Amish Paradise

D.C.'S GONE COUNTRY, or at least a bit rural. Smucker Farms of Lancaster County (2118 14th St. NW; 202-986-7332), a new shop that sources organic dairy products and produce straight from Amish farms in Pennsylvania, brings grass-fed beef, free-range poultry, organic yogurt and greens to the heart of the city. Olde Heritage Root Beer (\$2.75) sells out fast, and Trickling Springs Creamery's Belgian Chocolate Milk (\$6.75) requires a \$2 glass bottle deposit, because the farmers won't sell it in plastic.



MARGELY/EXPRESS

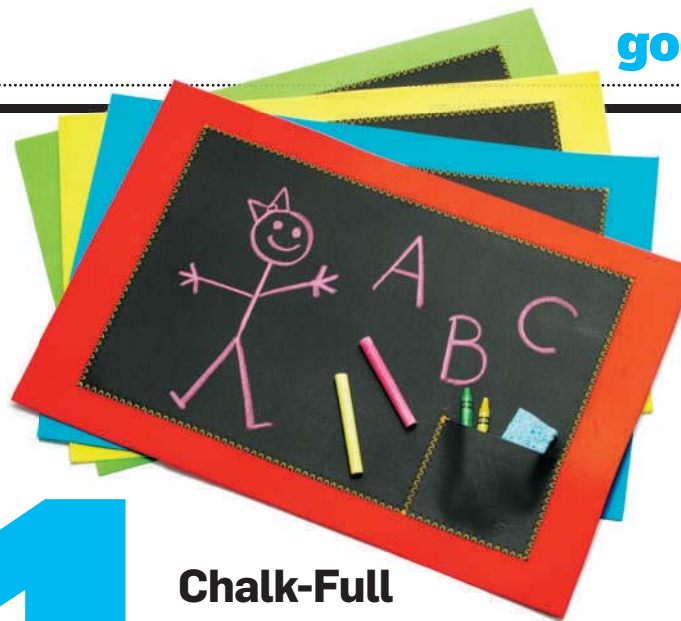
Grab Bag is gathered and reviewed by Jennifer Barger and Katherine Boyle. Find more food, fashion, beauty and home goods at expressnightout.com/grabbag.

1

Grab Bag

Chalk-Full

DOODLING DURING DINNER is usually frowned upon — especially when you end up permanently inking Grandma's Chippendale table. But you're encouraged to get creative between courses with these Chalkboard Place-mats (\$34 for four, Uncommongoods.com). The set comes with 12 pieces of chalk and a sponge you can use to erase each masterpiece. And although they're designed for kids, there's no shame in adults' wanting a chance to scribble, too. Or maybe make a note to yourself that you're allowed to have only one piece of that pie.



Foot Fusion

IT'S THE MOST DIFFICULT time of the year, particularly if you're one of the lucky few who shops resort collections in December. You must ask: "It is warm on this glitzy island paradise, but it's winter and I long to wear tights. What does one do?" The solution: the Loeffler Randall Neel espadrille pump at Bishop Boutique (\$375, 815 King St., Alexandria; 571-312-0042). The closed-toe, heeled shoe meets December halfway.



4

5 Lady's Choice

"HERS: DESIGN WITH A FEMININE TOUCH" (\$35, Clarkson Potter) is dedicated to "Adeline, Brielle and Olivia" and encourages inspiration boards in one's home office. For those who are down with that, this glossy decor book, by Romantic Homes magazine editor Jacqueline deMontravel, is essential reading. How else would you know how to artfully arrange pink shoes?



Dear Manolo

ANSWERS FROM THE SHOE BLOGGER

Now that all my Christmas shopping is done, I can address finding a pair of shoes to wear on New Year's Eve. My husband and I are going out with some people from his office (including his big boss) for a fancy evening of dinner, dancing and drinks. What do you suggest?

— MARILYN

Manolo says the Manolo is sad to say that the formally elegant sartorial traditions surrounding the New Year's Eve celebrations are slowly fading into the past. Where once we took pride in our appearance, shooting our cuffs and adjusting our cummerbunds before stepping onto the public stage, now we simply tighten our drawstrings and hope for the best.



Undoubtedly, our future celebrations will find us wearing brightly colored unisex jumpsuits made from miraculous fabrics that holographically conceal the shabbiness of our underclothing.

And now the Manolo will reveal to you the forgotten secret of why dressing up for the New Year's celebration is important: it both sacralizes the occasion and makes us feel better about ourselves. Beautiful clothing has the potential to elevate and ennoble us, to remind us of our potential to transcend the mundane problems of the ordinary world.

More than this, it is just fun, and what better reason can you have than that? Here is the Tracking from Stuart Weitzman (\$194, Zappos.com), the elegant strappy sandal perfect for the eve of the new year.



Ask the Manolo a question at manolo@shoeblogs.com. Visit the Manolo at shoeblogs.com.

lookout gift guide



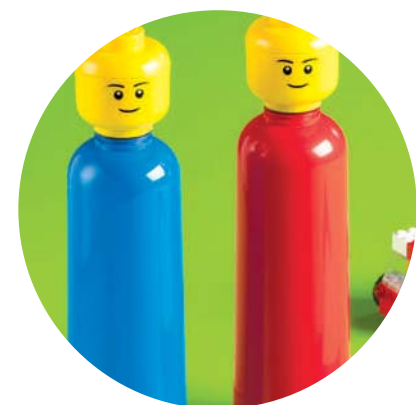
Snack for Santa Trust us: The Claus gets mad every time you leave out carrot sticks and Diet Coke in an effort to slim him down a size. So put out a peppermint-flecked dark chocolate Christmas Bar (\$7.50, Fleurir, 3235 P St. NW; 202-465-4368) so he'll be nice about your gift list.



Sugar & Spice

Help Dad improve his sweet-making with Lisa Yockelson's "Baking Style: Art, Craft, Recipes" (\$45, Politics & Prose, 5015 Connecticut Ave. NW; 202-364-1919). Recipes

include marzipan cakes, blueberry buckles and lots of cookies.



Toy Thermos Stay hydrated and hip this holiday season by filling up the Lego Drinking Bottle (\$12, the Container Store, multiple locations or Containerstore.com) with your sip of choice. And, yes, it's OK if you turn the childhood icon into a brandy flask — just don't share it with the kiddos.

Divine Dressings

Your foodie pal can perk up his pastas with a Sampler Gift Box of exotic olive oils and vinegars from California, including Champagne Mimosa Vinegar and Jalapeno Olive Oil (\$30, Secolari, 7249 Woodmont Ave., Bethesda; 800-946-2077).



Chill Out

When the children are nestled all snug in their beds, it's time to relax with a nice vintage. Keep your chardonnay cool with the Corkcicle (\$21.99, Home Rule).



Merry Beermas Kids open Advent calendars until Dec. 25; tipplers uncap beers.

Chosen by ChurchKey's sultan of suds, Greg Engert, the 12 Ales of Christmas (\$40, Planet Wine, 2004 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria; 703-549-3444) include Anderson Valley Winter Solstice and Delirium Noël.

It's a Hoot You can't un-burn the Christmas cookies, so keep a wise eye on the minutes with an Owllet Timer (\$10, Home Rule, 1807 14th St. NW; 202-797-5544).



Palatable Presents

Gift Guide

You know your loved one is a foodie when the DVR is filled with episodes of "Iron Chef" and a dozen Paula Deen shows. So, instead of getting him that Forever Lazy one-piece pajama set that'll keep him couch-bound, pick up some gastro gifts that will help him become a top chef and titillate his taste buds. "The key is finding something off the beaten path," says Fleurir Chocolates co-founder Ashley Hubbard. "You don't want to give a gift that's just going to be opened, then tossed in the basement." NEVIN MARTELL

Haute Cocoa

A venti Starbucks mocha has 450 calories, but this flavorful and all-natural brewed cocoa has only 10. It's also caffeine-free, so the java jitters won't get in the way of deftly unwrapping gifts. The Crio Brü 3 Piece Starter Set (\$42.97, Criobru.com) comes with two varieties and a French press, so you can get your chocolate fix right away.



Trimmer In Chief?

First ladies make holidays glam at the White House

You think it's rough untangling your icicle lights? Holidays at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue mean decorating dozens of trees, baking about 2,500 cookies and welcoming more than 100,000 visitors. Coordinating the festivities falls to the first ladies. Yes, they start planning in February and have lots of help. But managing to deck the White House still seems like a Christmas miracle. After trimming trees for Laura Bush in 2008, Coleen Christian Burke was inspired to pen "Christmas With the First Ladies" (\$30, Insight). We chatted with her about how presidents' wives have made things merry and bright. **ALEXA YABLONSKI**



Tannenbaum Treatment

First ladies plan both the White House's public holiday decorations and those in the private residence, as Nancy Reagan did in 1982. That year, Mr. T helped Reagan unveil the White House Christmas decorations. The two worked together on Reagan's "Just Say No" drug-free schools campaign.

PHOTO: RONALD REAGAN PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY



WHITE HOUSE PHOTO OFFICE

First lady Michelle Obama prefers simple, colorful holiday decor.

How did you research all the Christmases past?

I could do almost everything from my computer. But it was exciting to get packages [filled with photocopies from the presidential libraries] and not know what was in them. Sometimes it was a wash; other times I'd get something amazing, like the Kennedys' Christmas list that included the toys the kids would get.

Do you have a favorite photo in the book?

The Kennedys in Palm Beach, with Caroline dressed as an angel and John-John as a shepherd, with Jackie smoking in the corner in a cool red lounge suit.

Is it challenging to deck the halls at the White House?

The scale is amazing. The ceilings are 22 feet high. When I was there [in 2008], the grand foyer alone had 14 trees. And the challenge of the Blue Room tree is it's often covered with ornaments made by people from across the country. Laura Bush had it broken into a grid, with each ornament assigned a coordinate. So if the artist came and wanted to see his work, there was someone who could say, "Arkansas, OK. You're in quadrant five, section D."

Which first lady made the biggest impact on how future ones addressed the holiday season?

Pat Nixon made some incredible lasting impressions. She changed the way Americans were able to tour the White House. She started the candlelight tours [at night, so working people could visit] and made sure that blind children and the handicapped could tour.

Were any of the presidents involved in Christmas decorating?

Jimmy Carter signed off on every Christmas decoration!

“I got a chuckle at that: Jackie's Christmas tree was just a mess!”

— COLEEN CHRISTIAN BURKE, ON JACKIE KENNEDY'S PERSONAL HOLIDAY DECOR CHOICES.



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The official decorating themes seem so old-fashioned! Did anyone do a mod spin on the holiday?

I was struck by Hillary Clinton's decorating. She oversaw everything, and her ideas were innovative. In 1996, she had white, spidery trees that looked like coral. I'd never seen anything like them.

What holiday ideas did you steal for your own home or for clients?

Lady Bird Johnson's Jell-O mold recipe. I just thought it was a retro throwback. But it's delicious. I think we're going to have it this year at Christmas dinner!

Of all the Christmases you researched, which would you have most liked to have seen in person?

The Kennedy Christmas. It's Jackie and JFK! The funny thing about Jackie is that she started everything — “we should have a theme,” “we need to put our best foot forward,” “Christmas at the White House shouldn't be thrown together.” And then her personal tree was the most haphazard, thrown-together thing in the whole book. I got a chuckle at that: Jackie's Christmas tree was just a mess!

The Reelist**A Joyful Silence**

It's easier to convince people you're smart if you don't like stuff. If you like something and recommend it to people and they don't like it, they wonder about your intelligence level. "How could so-and-so love such-and-such? Is she stupid?"

If you follow film at all, you've



By **Kristen Page-Kirby**

heard of "The Artist." It's a black-and-white silent picture about a silent film actor (Jean Dujardin) who can't, or won't, make the transition to talkies. It's won a bunch of awards. It deserves

to win more. We should make up new awards just to give to "The Artist." Everyone who sees it should bake cookies and send them to director Michel Hazanavicius.

I love "The Artist" because it is a film that loves movies. It celebrates the beginnings of classical Hollywood with allusions and emulations, winking at "Citizen Kane" and stealing a little from "Vertigo," all while maintaining an unrelentingly cheery outlook. It's rare to find that kind of unadulterated joy in a smart film. Here, there's no cynicism: Love is a good thing. Loving movies is a good thing. Loving anything is good, because with love comes joy.

So I don't feel bad about enthusiastically adoring "The Artist." I grinned and gasped my way through the film, and it's been a long time since that's happened. I am dorkily, cheesily in love with this movie — so much so that I can't stay silent.



Read Kristen's previous columns at: expressnightout.com/thereelist



A farm boy named Albert (Jeremy Irvine) forms a close bond with his steed, Joey, in "War Horse." When Joey is sold to British World War I forces, Albert enlists to find him.

Galloping With Grace

Spielberg settles into his comfort zone with 'War Horse,' a tribute to old-school cinema

Film Review

Man's inhumanity to man is examined through a boy's mystical connection to a horse in "War Horse," Steven Spielberg's stirring, expertly manipulative adaptation of Michael Morpurgo's 1982 novel.

As much an homage to cinema at its most old-school theatrical as it is a meditation on the absurdity of war, Spielberg's lush epic spares nothing by way of action, melodrama, historical sweep or unapologetic schmaltz.

If "War Horse" errs on the side

of overkill — from composer John Williams' insistently sweet string music to Spielberg's ludicrously romantic lighting — it acquits its central mission with the strength and assurance of its phenomenal equine protagonist.

That plucky steed is named Joey, a playful thoroughbred colt admired from a distance by an English farm boy named Albert (Jeremy Irvine). When Albert's father, Ted (Peter Mullan), unexpectedly buys Joey in a drunken impulse, at first the boy is overjoyed, training the horse to respond to his slightest whistle. When Ted's landlord, Lyons (David Thewlis), demands funds he's due, it looks as if the family will have to sell Joey — until Albert persuades him to plow an entire rocky field, to the amaze-

Backstory

A Cultural Icon

British native Jeremy Irvine was no stranger to the story of "War Horse" when he got the part of Albert; he first read the Michael Morpurgo novel when he was 10 and subsequently reread it several times. The night before his audition, Irvine went to see the stage version of "War Horse" in London. "War Horse" has become, especially back home, such a part of our culture," he says. "I felt a huge amount of responsibility."

(ENTERTAINMENT NEWS WIRE)

War Horse (PG-13)

► **Director:** Steven Spielberg

► **Stars:** Jeremy Irvine, Emily Watson, David Thewlis

► **In a Nutshell:** Young Albert enlists to serve in WWI after his beloved horse, Joey, is sold to the cavalry. Albert's hopeful journey takes him out of England and across Europe as the war rages on.

ment of the onlookers who gather to witness the feat. But Joey's fate is far from secure: When World War I dawns, Ted does sell the horse, this time to the British forces, a stint that will send the doughty steed on a punishing odyssey through the war's bloodiest battlefields.

Spielberg stages these forays with breathtaking scope and detail, beginning with an astonishing set piece in which the British cavalry emerges from a wheat field, only to be met by German machine guns in an encounter that begins in glory and ends in carnage. By this time, Joey himself has made a friend, and as the two horses endure capture, escape, recapture and punishing labor carrying cannons up impossibly muddy hills, their agonizing trials take on the grievous symbolism of a secular passion play.

With "War Horse," Spielberg has created an appropriate showcase for the magnificent creature that emerges, one that recalls the great movie horses of yore in a story guaranteed to pluck, grab and wring viewers' hearts, but, thankfully, not break them.

ANN HORNADAY (THE WASHINGTON POST)

Buy Into Crowe's 'Zoo'

Though it may seem silly, the director's latest is a humorous and celebratory affair

Film Review

In "We Bought a Zoo," Matt Damon plays Benjamin Mee, a widower who's been alone with his kids for six months when he decides to upend their lives and buy a broken-down zoo in Southern California. Based on the real-life Mee's actual memoir, "We Bought a Zoo" contains all the ingredients of a maudlin, tearfully weeper.

Happily, writer-director Cameron Crowe keeps the most mawkish manipulations to a minimum in a movie that moves through its requisite stages — grief, acceptance, zany sight gags and healing — with smooth, entertaining efficiency. If you want the tough, spiky version of virtually the same story, see "The Descendants." If you want sunshine and uplift, see "We



Scarlett Johansson, left, plays the comely manager of the zoo Matt Damon's character, right, purchases in the wholesome family comedy "We Bought a Zoo."

Inspiration

'There's a Look That He Gets'

While Matt Damon says he didn't overtly model his character on Cameron Crowe, he's come to think that in the filmmaker's movies, "everybody's playing him a little bit." "There's a look that he gets," Damon says. "It's that thing where somebody's explaining something to you and you're not quite sure what they're saying and you're trying to figure it out." (AP)

We Bought a Zoo (PG)

- **Director:** Cameron Crowe
- **Stars:** Matt Damon, Scarlett Johansson, Thomas Haden Church
- **In a Nutshell:** Set in Southern California, a father moves his young family to the countryside to renovate and reopen a struggling zoo.
- **For Fans Of:** "Jerry Maguire"

Bought a Zoo."

Thomas Haden Church is funny as Benjamin's skeptical brother, Duncan, who speaks in a surfer's drawl and carries a series of sharp zingers in his quiver to defend against incoming earnestness. When he meets the zoo's comely manager, Kelly (a miscast but sporting Scarlett Johansson), he advises Benjamin to "dump the animals and keep Kelly. That's true joy."

Kelly is part of a team of eccentric zoo staffers that the Mees inherit when they buy the sweetly decrepit zoo, which animal lovers will be happy to hear isn't the jail-like fortress they avoid but a delightfully ramshackle, rambling affair of low fences and open grassy spaces.

Still, the low-key appeal of "We Bought a Zoo" is nearly impossible to resist, not just because it provides the minimal daily requirement of hugs and closure, but because it's such an apt wish fulfillment fantasy when for many viewers plan B isn't just a dream but a necessity.

"We Bought a Zoo" provides a welcome seasonal dash of wholesomeness and humor, but it's also a heartening celebration of second acts, even at their most unwelcome.

ANN HORNADAY (THE WASHINGTON POST)

'Artist' Speaks Volumes

Silence proves golden in this tribute to the movies of the 1920s

Film Review

Capping off a year of movies dedicated to high-style nostalgia, "The Artist" arrives like the last, lightest profiterole on the croquem-bouche.

A delectable homage to the silent movies of the 1920s, Michel Hazanavicius' romantic comedy plays like a sweet, airy confection, satisfying the audience's sweet tooth with gentle wit, a lavish production and winning performances.

The fact that "The Artist" is itself a silent movie — in black and

The Artist (R)

- **Director:** Michel Hazanavicius
- **Stars:** Jean Dujardin
- **In a Nutshell:** Hollywood, 1927: As silent movie star George Valentin wonders if the arrival of talking pictures will cause him to fade into oblivion, he sparks with Peppy Miller, a young dancer set for a big break.

white, no less — shouldn't deter viewers from giving it a whirl. They'll discover the sublime joy to be had simply in letting images and music dance across the screen in an infectiously spirited tableau that's as involving as it is intoxicating.

"The Artist" opens in 1927, when dapper Errol Flynn-esque film star George Valentin (Jean Dujardin)



Jean Dujardin stars as silent film star George Valentin in "The Artist."

rules Hollywood as its reigning star, his million-dollar grin coming as easily as the waves of applause that predictably greet every one of his new pictures. When George crosses paths with an eager newcomer named Peppy Miller (Berenice Bejo), he's cast in the role of mentor; but when talking pictures become the order of the day, she quickly begins an ascent up stardom's ladder, while George's fortunes begin their slide.

At a time when movies nearly always overreach, either in technological sophistication or philosophical pseudo-depth, "The Artist" comes as a particularly refreshing balm: It's a film that simply offers viewers an elegant escape from the toils and worries of the real world, plunging them into an alternate universe where glamour, romance and indefatigable optimism rule the day. A.H.



CASTING CALL

War for the World

Harrison Ford has joined the cast of "Ender's Game," an adaptation of the Orson Scott Card novel. Abigail Breslin has also signed on. "Hugo's" Asa Butterfield stars as Ender Wiggin in the movie, which is set in a future in which Earth is under attack by an insect-like race. Ford plays a commander who spots Ender's potential to help defend Earth.

(THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER)

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DAVID JAMES

Though nearly 50, Tom Cruise, top, brings the usual physicality to his role as Ethan Hunt in the new "Mission: Impossible" film.

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THE ADVENTURES OF TINTIN (PG, 107 minutes) Steven Spielberg's crisp, richly rendered animated adaptation of "Tintin" could be counted as both a success and a failure. Spielberg has brought Tintin to the big screen, but not quite to life. From the film's opening sequence, when Tintin (voiced by Jamie Bell) and his terrier, Snowy, find a rare model ship in a crowded outdoor flea market, every frame is jam-packed with gleaming surfaces and beguiling reflections. No sooner does Tintin barter successfully for the ship than two men try to steal it, sending Tintin and Snowy on an adventure that will take them from Europe to the high seas and North Africa. The story really gets rollicking when Tintin meets Captain Haddock (Andy Serkis), a dipsomaniacal seafarer who joins Tintin's quest to find out why so many people are interested in his little model boat. On the surface, "The Adventures of Tintin" is unimpeachable, but the surface is where it stays. **A.H.**

THE DESCENDANTS (R, 115 minutes) George Clooney doesn't put a foot wrong except on purpose in "The Descendants," a pitch-perfect movie that threads a thin



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Noomi Rapace, left, the first “Girl With the Dragon Tattoo” actress, joins Robert Downey Jr., right, in “Sherlock Holmes.”

needle between comedy and devastating drama. Clooney's Matt King is the wealthy descendant of Hawaiian royalty, who, as the movie opens, is watching his wife, Elizabeth, lie comatose in a hospital bed after suffering a near-fatal boating accident. A distant husband and father, Matt must find a way to bond with his daughters, 10-year-old Scottie (Amara Miller) and 17-year-old Alex (Shailene Woodley). "The Descendants" is an ode to emotional dissonance, wherein regret and

antic humor can coexist and even share a drink; it's a tricky tonal high-wire act that writer-director Alexander Payne pulls off with uncommon skill and aplomb. **A.H. THE GIRL WITH THE DRAGON TATTOO** (R, 158 minutes) Rooney Mara's portrayal of punked-out cyber-genius Lisbeth Salander does much to advance the appeal of this spiky heroine, whose victimization at the hands of piggish men and her subsequent avenging fury have made her a feminist avatar for the WikiLeaks era. Handsomely filmed and impeccably acted, "The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo" is at once satisfying and underwhelming, a pristine, coolly atmospheric procedural thriller that comes to the party a tad overdressed in hype. The movie's most unsettling scenes, a brutal rape and an equally torturous act of revenge, are staged by Fincher for maximum shock value. But for the most part, he plays down his stylistic signatures, allowing the performances to project the story's most subtle meanings. **A.H. HAPPY FEET TWO** (PG, 100 minutes) In "Happy Feet Two," there's precious little of what gave "Happy Feet" its incongruous, yet infectious charm: a tap-dancing penguin. The gotta-move protagonist of the first animated, Antarctica-set feature — a misfit young emperor penguin named Mumble (Elijah Wood) — returns for the sequel. But this time he's all growl

entertainment **lookout**

up — and a lot less fun. In his place are a lot of other polar creatures vying for screen time and our attention. The biggest letdown is the absence of dancing. Mumble, the former hooper, is now the father of a penguin chick named Erik (Ava Acres). He spends most of his time putting his foot down after Erik, who doesn't like to dance, runs away from home, and Mumble is forced to go get him and bring him back, scolding him the entire way. So much for happy feet. **M.O. HUGO** (PG, 125 minutes) "Hugo" begins with one of Martin Scorsese's signature bravura tracking shots, this time through a cavernous train station in 1930s Paris. The camera is following the title character, a 12-year-old boy who lives secretly just below the station's ceiling. When he's not scrounging for food, he's gathering trinkets and tools to fix a lifelike metal automaton that represents his last link to a once-happy life. For the most part, it's a somber affair, its self-seriousness only deepening when Hugo runs afoul of a grumpy toy seller and his goddaughter, Isabelle. But during "Hugo's" final 20 minutes or so, the film truly comes to life. **A.H. MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE — GHOST PROTOCOL** (PG-13, 133 minutes) Hand it to Tom Cruise: Even on the cusp of the creaky age of 50, he still manages to do his own stunts, look studly in a suit and maintain perfect hair sweepage. "Ghost Protocol" possesses the requisite number of expertly choreographed "How'd they

do that?" scenes, as well as some terrific supporting performances from "Mission: Impossible" veterans and newcomers. Rather than strain so mightily to remind viewers of his still-rock-hard abs and blue-steel stare, Cruise is more than entitled to remind us that he can actually act. Especially when he convincingly plays Ethan convincingly playing a Russian general and then engages a Kremlinguard in some absurdly clever misdirection. That piece of visual legerdemain, as well as Ethan's quarry — Russian nuclear launch codes — are about as retro as it gets. **A.H. THE MUPPETS** (PG, 98 minutes) "The Muppets" is both a delightful family film about the Muppets and a winking, self-referential satire about how lame the Muppets are. How does it manage that trick? By starting with the premise that the Muppets are has-beens. What sets the plot in motion is a visit to Los Angeles by Gary, Mary and Walter (Gary is a Muppets groupie, and when he arrives in Hollywood, he can't quite accept the fact that his heroes are washed up. With the assistance of Gary and Mary, Walter sets out to reunite the Muppets for one last show, the proceeds from which will be used to save the decrepit Muppet Studios building from being torn down. So far, so corny. What saves "The Muppets" from itself is a sharp eye for just how silly all of this is. Directed by James Bobin and co-written by Segel and Nicholas Stoller, the film is

mordant without being mean and sweet without being saccharine. **M.O. NEW YEAR'S EVE** (PG-13, 118 minutes) "New Year's Eve" exists as a particularly soulless example of a movie that's less made than machined. A cobbled-together mash-up of actorly duets, this leaden effort sags when it should shimmer, labors clunkily when it should glide and — most unforgivably — plops some otherwise attractive and even talented actors into roles that are completely outside their physical and psychic comfort zone. Most insulting of all, the filmmakers insist on inserting bits of moralizing in the movie like so many razor blades in a candy apple. Clocking in at an unforgivable two hours, "New Year's Eve" perpetrates the same forced jollity, oversize proportions and crass superficiality as the very holiday it so wanly exploits. **A.H. SHAME** (NC-17, 99 minutes) In Steve McQueen's mournful portrait of an addict hitting rock bottom, Michael Fassbender plays a man seeking self-annihilation through the compulsive pursuit of sex. As successful New Yorker Brandon, Fassbender spends a great deal of time staring moodily. Brandon may be able to make it anywhere, but even when he's with another person, he's alone. That changes with the sudden arrival of his little sister, Sissy (Carey Mulligan), whose hospital bracelet indicates that all is not entirely well with her either.

Continued on page 24



Gary Oldman, left, and John Hurt, right, lead a stellar cast of British actors in the 1970s-set "Tinker, Tailor, Solider, Spy."

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Continued from page 23

Sissy upsets Brandon's metronomically choreographed rituals, which, it becomes clear, emanate from a wound deep in their shared past. "Shame" leaves motivations and backstories up to the viewer's

imagination and focuses with unblinking frankness on the depths of Brandon's most self-loathing behavior. A.H.

SHERLOCK HOLMES: A GAME OF SHADOWS (PG-13, 129 minutes) Victoria buffs will not be amused by this film, but it's a modest improvement on bad-boy director Guy Ritchie's first tweaking of Arthur Conan Doyle's iconic detective. Not because it's more subtle: This sequel

is just as profligate as its 2009 predecessor, with explosions, anachronisms and quick cuts. But the dialogue is a little sharper, and Holmes gets a worthy opponent in Professor Moriarty, a diabolical mastermind who has begun a series of bombings and assassinations, hoping to spark a "world war." Robert Downey Jr. plays Holmes as brainy yet highly physical, and keen on dressing up. Jude Law

returns as Dr. Watson, Holmes' famous sidekick. Holmes' latest case nearly scrubs Watson's wedding and ends the new couple's honeymoon before it even begins. Holmes, the filmmakers wink, can't bear to let Watson go. The suggestion that the detective has a homoerotic attachment to his sidekick, floated in the first movie, is made even more explicit here. "A Game of Shadows" draws here

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“A MAGICAL EXPERIENCE! YOU WILL LEAVE THE THEATER EXHILARATED.”

THE NEW YORK OBSERVER
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my week with

MARILYN

R RESTRICTED UNDER 17 REQUIRES ACCOMPANYING PARENT OR ADULT GUARDIAN SOME LANGUAGE

BASED ON THE BOOK BY COLIN CLARK SCREENPLAY BY ADRIAN HODGES DIRECTED BY SIMON CURTIS
WWW.MYWEKWITHMARILYNMOVIE.COM FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK
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SORRY NO PASSES • CHECK DIRECTORIES FOR THEATRES AND SHOWTIMES

and there on Doyle's tales but relies more on Hong Kong's hyperactive 1980s new wave, as filtered through "The Matrix" and Quentin Tarantino. Extreme close-ups, violent edits and slo-mo inserts are used to depict both visceral action and Holmes' methodical thought. Thinking, however, is not the movie's priority. **MARK JENKINS**

THE SITTER (R, 80 minutes) Spiked with some loopily inspired supporting performances and Jonah Hill's characteristically inspired improvisational asides, "The Sitter" is an efficient but uneven programmer, whose most valuable contribution to the cinematic landscape is its blessedly brief running time. The reason Hill's Noah finds himself baby-sitting a neighbor's three kids is that their regular sitter has a urinary tract infection. In the course of the ensuing night, he and Slater, Blithe and Rodrigo run amok through a Brooklyn bat mitzvah, an upscale restaurant, a street-tough pool hall and a retail outlet called Neal's Diamonds. The biggest kid, of course, is Noah himself, another man-child abroad in a world that can't see the exquisite gifts behind the girth. **A.H.**

TINKER, TAILOR, SOLDIER, SPY (R, 130 minutes) "Trust no one, Jim," the British spy chief known as Control says as the film opens. "Especially no one in the mainstream." With those tantalizing words of advice — delivered by John Hurt — the game is deliciously afoot in Tomas Alfredson's long-awaited adaptation of John le Carre's Cold War-era spy novel. Jim Prideaux and his boss, Control, are both working for the British intelligence service MI6 in 1973 as the film opens, when the Cold War is at its height and Control is certain that MI6 has been infiltrated by a mole. Control sends Jim to Hungary, where the events that transpire will have inevitable reverberations back in London, where veterans engage in silent-but-deadly bureaucratic knife fights, all the while being impassively observed by the masterfully reticent career spook George Smiley. **A.H.**

THE TWILIGHT SAGA: BREAKING DAWN - PART 1 (PG-13, 117 minutes) Recent high school graduate Bella Swan grows up a lot here, becoming a bride, a potential mother and perhaps something stranger. Yet the "Twilight Saga" hasn't matured along with its heroine. In fact, the latest movie regresses a bit, delivering more filler, less feeling and crummier CGI than last year's "Eclipse." As the trailer (and the book) have already

revealed, the drama this time is principally obstetric. In the movie's bland first half, Bella (Kristen Stewart) prepares for woodland nuptials with pasty vampire dreamboat Edward (Robert Pattinson). We do see a bloody Edward-ian flashback and an angry run through the Washington-state forest by wolfman Jacob (Taylor Lautner), the excluded member of the tale's menagerie a trois. But much of

the action involves shoes, dresses and tearful, happy-sad chats. M.J.

YOUNG ADULT (R, 94 minutes) Mavis Gary, played with perfect pitch by Charlize Theron, is a 37-year-old divorced writer facing the cancellation of her popular series of young adult novels. Lonely and depressed, Mavis shuffles around her apartment in sweat pants, swilling booze, eating fast food, watching bad TV

and having meaningless sex, all the while making insensitive comments about other people. The actress wholeheartedly embraces Mavis' dark—and, let's face it, somewhat guylike—side with gusto. It's a performance that's as hard to look away from as it is to watch, especially when Mavis decides to return to the Podunk where she grew up in order to brazenly seduce Buddy (Patrick Wilson), the guy she dated

in high school. Admittedly, there are some laughs here. Most come courtesy of Matt (Patton Oswalt), the overweight-geek former classmate of Mavis' who improbably reconnects with her upon her arrival in Mercury, Minn. M.O.

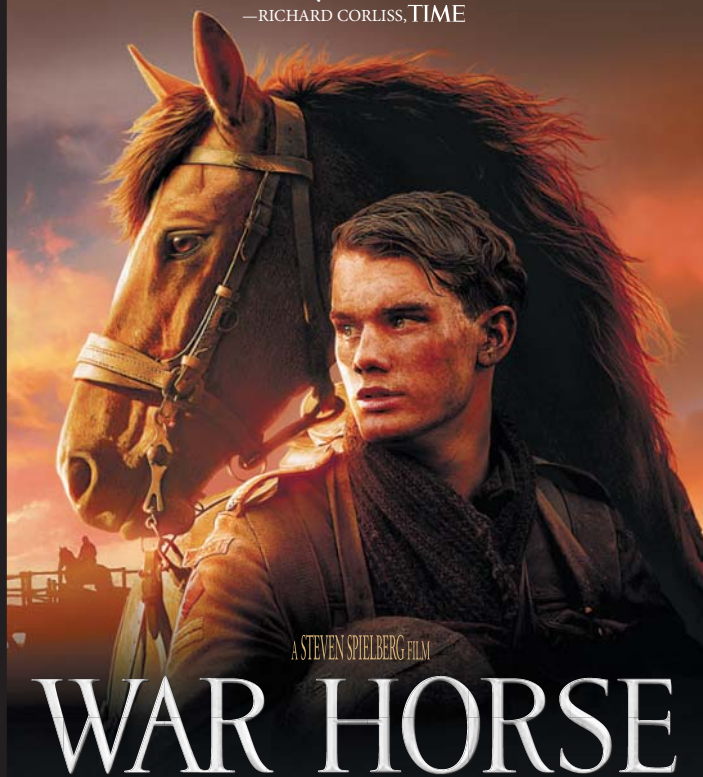
▶ REVIEWS BY THE WASHINGTON POST'S ANN HORNADAY AND MICHAEL O'SULLIVAN. FOR FULL REVIEWS OF THESE AND OTHER FILMS, SEE GOINGOUTGUIDE.COM/MOVIES

BEST PICTURE OF THE YEAR

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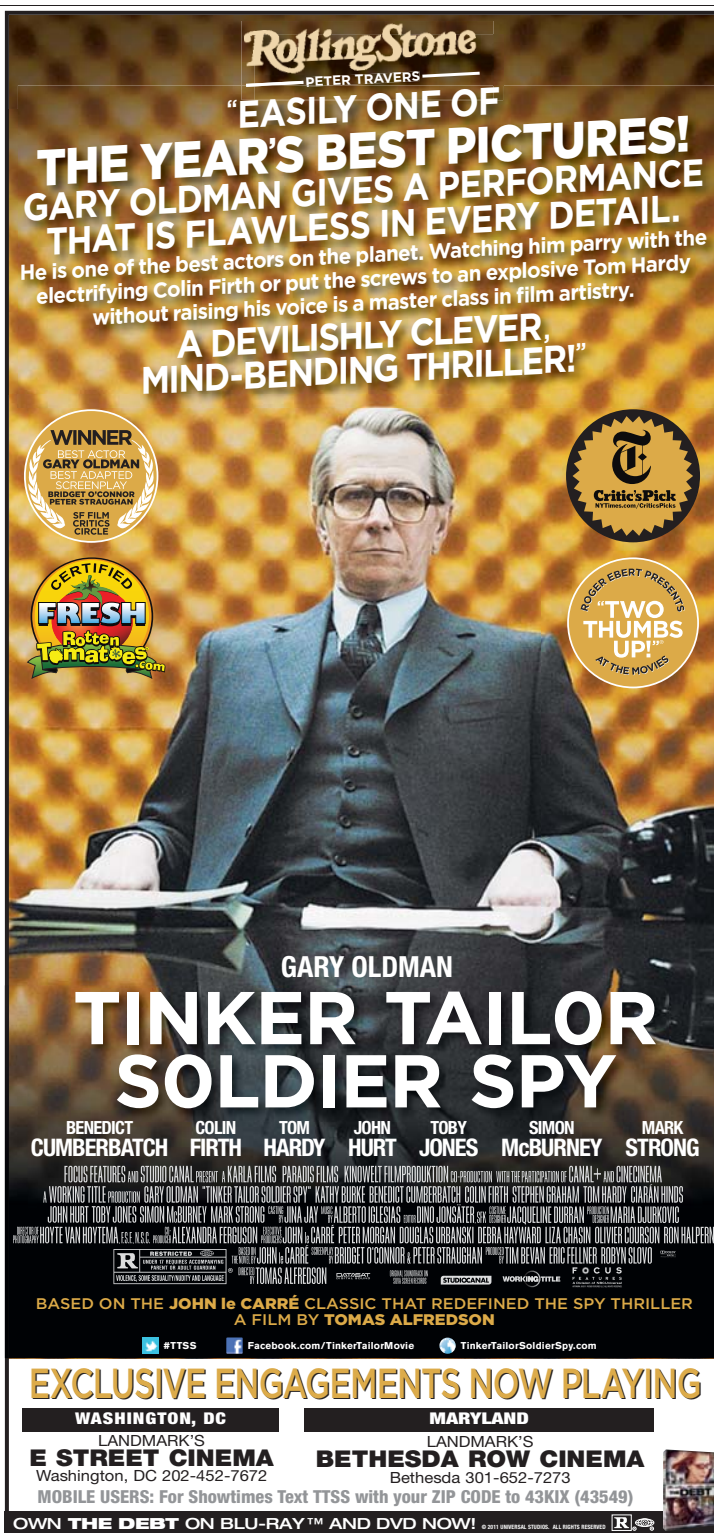
—RICHARD CORLISS, TIME



DREAMWORKS PICTURES AND RELIANCE ENTERTAINMENT PRESENT
 AN AMBLIN ENTERTAINMENT/KENNEDY MARSHALL COMPANY PRODUCTION A STEVEN SPIELBERG FILM "WAR HORSE"
 EMILY WATSON DAVID THEWLIS PETER MULLAN NIELS ARESTRUP JEREMY IRVINE MUSIC BY JOHN WILLIAMS
 EDITED BY MICHAEL KAHN, A.C.E. DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY JANUSZ KAMINSKI EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS FRANK MARSHALL REVEL GUEST
 PRODUCED BY STEVEN SPIELBERG KATHLEEN KENNEDY BASED ON THE NOVEL BY MICHAEL MORPURGO SCREENPLAY BY LEE HALL AND RICHARD CURTIS
 SOUNDBLACK ON SONY CLASSICAL
 PG-13 PARENTS STRONGLY CAUTIONED
 Some Material May Be Inappropriate for Children Under 12
 INTENSE. SOME LANGUAGE. OF WAR. HORSE. ENG.

THE JOURNEY BEGINS CHRISTMAS DAY
CHECK LOCAL LISTINGS FOR THEATRES AND SHOWTIMES
 PRESENTED IN 7.1 DIGITAL SURROUND IN SELECT THEATRES

SOBRY NO PASSES



lookout **entertainment**



1 'Tis the Season To Get Down

We keep hearing people talk about the spirit of Christmas and are a little confused. We're pretty sure, having attended the annual James Brown Death-mas dance party at the Black Cat, that what people mean is that Christmas has soul. Brown died on Christmas of 2006, so every year DJ Soul Call Paul celebrates the season with a huge dance party. Later, James Brown will dance down your chimney and bring you funky presents! (Joke.) **Black Cat, 1811 14th St. NW; Sun., 9 p.m., \$5; 202-667-7960, Blackcatdc.com. (U St.-Cardozo)**

2 It's Dec. 23. Panic! Spend!

The good news is that you're almost past having to buy presents for anyone for another year. The bad news is that you have only another day and a half to buy presents THIS year. We recommend the holiday market in Chinatown, which has about 50 vendors of cool trinkets for the people you have to buy for but for whom you haven't found the perfect thing. **F Street between 7th and 9th streets NW; through Fri. at 8 p.m., free; Downtownholidaymarket.com. (Gallery Place)**

3 Political Humor

While we can see why a Washington-themed version of "The Nutcracker" would appeal to the side of D.C. that likes to make misogynistic jokes, this production just stars George Washington as the Nutcracker and George III as the Mouse King. Topical! The show, choreographed by Washington Ballet artistic director Septime Webre, left, has been a Washington staple for years now. **Warner Theatre, 513 13th St. NW; through Sat., \$31-\$90 202-783-4000, Warnertheater.com. (Metro Center)**



Local movie times

DISTRICT
AMC Loews Georgetown 14
3111 K Street N.W. www.AMCTheatres.com

The Adventures of Tintin (PG) Digital Presentation: 12:00-7:00
Movie Times
Hugo 3D (PG) RealD 3D: 9:55-12:50-3:50
The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn - Part 1 (PG-13) Digital Presentation: (I) 4:15
New Year's Eve (PG-13) Digital Presentation: 6:50-9:40
We Bought a Zoo (PG) Digital Presentation: 10:20-1:10-4:20-7:20-10:20
Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows (PG-13) Digital Presentation: (I) 7:05-10:10
Mission: Impossible - Ghost Protocol: The IMAX Experience (PG-13) IMAX: (I) 4:00-7:15-10:30
The Adventures of Tintin: An IMAX 3D Experience (PG) IMAX 3D: 10:15-1:00
The Adventures of Tintin 3D (PG) RealD 3D: (I) 10:40-4:10-9:50
The Descendants (R) AMC INDEPENDENT: (I) 10:50-1:45-4:40-7:40-10:40
The Artist (PG-13) AMC INDEPENDENT: Digital Presentation: 11:10-1:50-4:30-7:30-10:00
The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo (R) Digital Presentation: 10:30-2:00-5:40-9:15
J. Edgar (R) Digital Presentation: 10:00-1:05
Young Adult (R) 9:50-12:10-2:30-5:10-7:50-10:15
The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo (R) (I) 12:00-3:30-7:10-10:50
Mission: Impossible - Ghost Protocol (PG-13) 10:55-2:10-5:15-8:20-11:40
Alvin and the Chipmunks: Chipwrecked (G) (I) 11:15-1:40-4:15-6:30-9:00
Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows (PG-13) 11:00-1:55-5:00-8:15-11:15
The Muppets (PG) (I) 10:10-12:55-3:45-6:40-9:20

AMC Loews Uptown 1
3426 Connecticut Avenue N.W. www.AMCTheatres.com

Mission: Impossible - Ghost Protocol (PG-13) Digital Presentation: (I) 12:00-3:30-7:00-10:30

AMC Mazza Gallerie
5300 Wisconsin Ave. NW www.AMCTheatres.com

The Adventures of Tintin (PG) Digital Presentation: 11:30-4:50-10:20
Alvin and the Chipmunks: Chipwrecked (G) CC/DVS-Closed Captions & Descriptive Video: 12:00-2:20-4:40-7:00-9:15
New Year's Eve (PG-13) Club Cinema-Over 21 after 6:00 pm: Digital Presentation: 11:20-2:10-5:00-7:50-10:35
Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows (PG-13) Club Cinema-Over 21 after 6:00 pm: Digital Presentation: (I) 10:30-1:30-4:30-7:30-10:30
The Adventures of Tintin 3D (PG) RealD 3D: 2:10-7:40
Hugo (PG) Digital Presentation: 1:10-6:50
The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo (R) (I) 12:10-3:40-7:10-10:40
We Bought a Zoo (PG) (I) 10:20-1:20-4:20-7:20-10:10
The Muppets (PG) (I) 10:10-4:00-9:40

Avalon
5612 Connecticut Avenue www.theavalon.org

The Skin I Live In (La piel que habito) (R) 12:00-7:45
Le Havre (NR) 5:30
The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo (R) 1:15-4:45-8:15
The Way (PG-13) 2:45

Landmark E Street Cinema
555 11th Street NW www.landmarktheatres.com

The Descendants (R) 11:40-2:10-4:40-7:10-9:40
The Artist (PG-13) (I) 11:30-12:45-2:00-3:15-4:30-5:45-7:00-8:15-9:30-10:30
Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy (R) 12:30-2:00-3:30-5:00-6:30-8:00-9:30
My Week with Marilyn (R) 11:50-2:20-4:50-7:20-9:50
Shame (NC-17) 12:10-2:40-5:10-7:40-10:10
A Dangerous Method (R) 12:15-2:30-5:00-7:30-9:55

Lincoln Theatre
1215 U Street NW www.thelincolntheatre.org

The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo (R) (I) 1:00-4:00-7:30

Regal Gallery Place Stadium 14
707 Seventh Street NW www.regalcinemas.com

Alvin and the Chipmunks: Chipwrecked (G) CC-Open Caption: (I) 12:10
Hugo 3D (PG) RealD 3D: (I) 12:35-6:40-9:40
Young Adult (R) 12:05-2:40-5:00-8:00-10:20-12:35
The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo (R) (I) 12:00-1:30-3:30-5:20-7:00-9:00-10:30-12:25
Hugo (PG) 3:40
Mission: Impossible - Ghost Protocol (PG-13) (I) 11:50-3:00-3:50-6:30-7:20-9:30-10:40-12:30
Alvin and the Chipmunks: Chipwrecked (G) (I) 11:40-1:50-2:20-4:00-4:40-6:10-6:50-8:30-9:10-10:40-11:20
J. Edgar (R) 12:40
The Adventures of Tintin (PG) 11:55-1:00-2:30-5:10-7:40-10:10-12:35
New Year's Eve (PG-13) 1:40-4:30-7:15
The Sitter (R) 9:55-12:10
Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows (PG-13) (I) 1:20-4:20-4:50-7:10-7:50-10:00-10:45-12:45
The Muppets (PG) 11:35-2:05-4:35-7:05-9:50-12:20
We Bought a Zoo (PG) 12:50-4:10-7:30-10:15

West End Cinema
2301 M Street NW <http://westendcinema.com/>

Drive (R) Albert Brooks in his Golden Globe nominated role: 10:00
My Reincarnation (NR) English Subtitles: 1:40-3:40-5:40-7:40
Hugo (PG) 2D: 1:40-4:20-7:00-9:40
Margin Call (R) 9:30
Melancholia (R) 2:00-4:40-7:20

MARYLAND
AFI Silver Theatre Cultural Center
8633 Colesville Road www.afi.com/silver

The Artist (PG-13) No Passes: (I) 12:20-2:30-4:40-7:00-9:20
My Week with Marilyn (R) 11:20-4:00-6:15
Shame (NC-17) No Passes: (I) 1:25-3:30-5:35-7:40-9:45
It's a Wonderful Life (1946) (G) 12:30-8:30

AMC Loews Center Park 8
4001 Powder Mill Rd. www.AMCTheatres.com

The Adventures of Tintin (PG) Digital Presentation: (I) 10:30-3:45-9:15
Mission: Impossible - Ghost Protocol (PG-13) Digital Presentation: (I) 10:45-1:50-4:50-7:45-10:45
Alvin and the Chipmunks: Chipwrecked (G) Digital Presentation: (I) 11:45-2:00-4:15-6:45-9:00
We Bought a Zoo (PG) Digital Presentation: (I) 11:00-1:45-4:30-7:15-10:00
The Sitter (R) Digital Presentation: 1:20-3:40-5:45-8:00-10:25
Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows (PG-13) Digital Presentation: (I) 10:15-1:15-4:20-7:30-10:30
The Muppets (PG) Digital Presentation: 11:30-2:15-5:00-7:40-10:15
The Adventures of Tintin 3D (PG) RealD 3D: (I) 1:00-6:30
The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo (R) Digital Presentation: (I) 10:00-12:10-3:30-7:00-10:20

AMC Loews White Flint 5
11301 Rockville Pike www.AMCTheatres.com

Hugo 3D (PG) RealD 3D: 9:45-12:40-3:50-6:45
New Year's Eve (PG-13) Digital Presentation: 10:15
Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows (PG-13) Digital Presentation: 10:15-1:15-4:35-7:55-10:55
The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo (R) Digital Presentation: 12:10-3:35-7:05-10:30
Mission: Impossible - Ghost Protocol (PG-13) 10:00-1:00-4:20-7:40-10:45
Alvin and the Chipmunks: Chipwrecked (G) 10:30-1:30-4:50-7:20-10:00

AMC Magic Johnson Capital Center 12
800 Shoppers Way www.AMCTheatres.com

Happy Feet Two in 3D (PG) RealD 3D: 1:20-6:30

The Adventures of Tintin (PG) Digital Presentation: (I) 11:30-4:50-10:30
Mission: Impossible - Ghost Protocol (PG-13) Digital Presentation: (I) 10:00-1:10-4:20-7:40-10:45-11:40
Alvin and the Chipmunks: Chipwrecked (G) Digital Presentation: (I) 10:45-1:15-3:45-6:20-8:45-11:00
The Sitter (R) Digital Presentation: 10:40-1:00-3:20-5:40-8:00-10:20
Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows (PG-13) Digital Presentation: (I) 9:40-12:50-4:05-7:10-10:15
The Adventures of Tintin 3D (PG) RealD 3D: (I) 2:10-7:30
Happy Feet Two (PG) Digital Presentation: 10:30-3:50-9:10
The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo (R) (I) 9:00-11:00-12:05-2:30-3:30-6:00-7:00-9:30-10:40
Mission: Impossible - Ghost Protocol (PG-13) (I) 9:10-12:10-3:20-6:40-9:50
Alvin and the Chipmunks: Chipwrecked (G) (I) 11:45-2:15-4:45-7:20-9:45
The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn - Part 1 (PG-13) 11:10-5:00-10:35
New Year's Eve (PG-13) 2:00-7:50
We Bought a Zoo (PG) (I) 9:15-12:40-4:10-7:20-10:25

Landmark Bethesda Row Cinema
7235 Woodmont Avenue www.landmarktheatres.com

Young Adult (R) 10:30-12:55-3:10-5:25-7:45-9:55
The Descendants (R) 10:05-10:45-12:35-1:30-3:15-4:15-6:00-7:05-8:45-9:45
The Artist (PG-13) (I) 10:00-11:30-12:30-2:00-3:00-4:30-5:30-7:00-8:00-9:30-10:15
Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy (R) 10:10-11:00-1:00-2:30-4:00-5:20-7:15-8:30-10:05
A Dangerous Method (R) 10:40-1:40-4:45-7:10-9:35

Regal Bethesda 10
7272 Wisconsin Avenue www.regalcinemas.com

The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo (R) (I) 12:00-1:00-3:30-4:30-7:00-8:00-10:25
Hugo (PG) 12:40-3:40-7:20
The Adventures of Tintin (PG) (I) 11:00-1:20-4:00-7:10-9:40
Mission: Impossible - Ghost Protocol (PG-13) (I) 1:10-4:20-7:30-10:30
Alvin and the Chipmunks: Chipwrecked (G) (I) 11:30-12:30-2:00-2:50-4:05-5:10-6:40-9:00
New Year's Eve (PG-13) 7:40-10:20
We Bought a Zoo (PG) 12:45-3:45-6:50-9:50
The Sitter (R) 10:05
Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows (PG-13) (I) 11:00-12:40-1:45-3:40-4:40-6:50-7:45-9:50-10:30

Regal Hyattsville Royale Stadium 14
6505 America Blvd.

Young Adult (R) RVC: 12:05-2:30-4:55-7:20-9:50
The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo (R) (I) 12:00-1:10-3:30-4:40-7:00-8:10-10:25
The Adventures of Tintin (PG) 1:20-3:15-4:00-7:25-10:05
Mission: Impossible - Ghost Protocol (PG-13) (I) 12:10-1:25-4:45-7:10-7:50-10:10-10:45
Alvin and the Chipmunks: Chipwrecked (G) (I) 12:00-12:30-1:00-2:10-2:40-3:10-4:20-4:50-5:20-7:00-7:30-9:10
The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn - Part 1 (PG-13) 1:30-4:30-7:40-10:30
New Year's Eve (PG-13) 10:35
We Bought a Zoo (PG) 12:55-3:50-7:20-10:20
The Sitter (R) 12:50-3:00-5:10-7:35-10:00
Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows (PG-13) (I) 12:15-1:15-3:25-4:35-6:45-7:15-8:45-9:45-10:15-10:45

Regal Majestic 20 & IMAX
900 Ellsworth Drive

Arthur Christmas 3D (PG) RealD 3D: (I) 12:50-5:35-10:15
Alvin and the Chipmunks: Chipwrecked (G) CC/DVS-Closed Captions & Descriptive Video Service: (I) 10:15-12:45-2:45-4:50-7:05
Hugo 3D (PG) RealD 3D: (I) 11:35-2:25-7:55-10:40
Mission: Impossible - Ghost Protocol: The IMAX Experience

(PG-13) IMAX: (I) 7:15-10:05-12:50
The Adventures of Tintin: An IMAX 3D Experience (PG) IMAX 3D: (I) 9:50-12:10-2:35-4:55
The Adventures of Tintin 3D (PG) RealD 3D: (I) 11:10-1:40-4:10-6:45-9:20-11:50
Young Adult (R) 10:45-1:05-3:30-6:20-8:40-11:00
The Descendants (R) 11:15-1:55-4:30-7:25-10:25
The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo (R) (I) 10:05-10:55-12:05-1:25-2:15-3:35-4:45-6:00-6:55-8:10-9:35-10:20-11:30-12:20
Hugo (PG) 5:10
Arthur Christmas (PG) 10:20-3:15-7:50
The Adventures of Tintin (PG) 10:25-12:55
Mission: Impossible - Ghost Protocol (PG-13) (I) 11:05-2:10-3:25-5:05-6:30-8:35-9:30-11:35-12:25
Alvin and the Chipmunks: Chipwrecked (G) (I) 10:40-11:30-1:00-1:35-3:00-3:45-5:30-7:40-10:00-12:10
The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn - Part 1 (PG-13) 9:10-11:50
New Year's Eve (PG-13) 12:00-2:40-5:20-8:15-10:45
We Bought a Zoo (PG) 9:55-12:40-3:50-6:40-9:45-12:30
The Sitter (R) 11:25-1:45-4:00-6:15-8:30-10:35
Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows (PG-13) (I) 10:30-11:45-1:15-2:30-4:15-5:15-6:10-7:10-8:05-8:55-9:55-10:55-11:45-12:45
The Muppets (PG) 10:00-12:25-3:05-5:45-8:20-10:50

VIRGINIA
AMC Courthouse Plaza 8
2150 Clarendon Blvd. www.AMCTheatres.com

Arthur Christmas 3D (PG) RealD 3D: 1:30-6:40
Hugo 3D (PG) RealD 3D: 1:00-6:50
The Muppets (PG) Digital Presentation: (I) 11:20-2:40-4:50-7:30-10:10
The Adventures of Tintin 3D (PG) RealD 3D: 11:00-1:40-4:20-7:00-9:40
My Week with Marilyn (R) AMC INDEPENDENT: 10:10-12:40-3:00-5:25-7:50-10:20
Hugo (PG) Digital Presentation: 10:00-4:00-9:50
Arthur Christmas (PG) Digital Presentation: 10:45-4:10-9:20
The Adventures of Tintin (PG) (I) 12:00-2:40-5:20-8:00-10:30
New Year's Eve (PG-13) 11:10-1:50-4:30-7:20-10:00
We Bought a Zoo (PG) (I) 12:30-3:30-6:30-9:30

AMC Hoffman Center 22
206 Swamp Fox Rd. www.AMCTheatres.com

The Adventures of Tintin (PG) Digital Presentation: (I) 9:30-12:15-3:00-5:50-8:40-11:20
Arthur Christmas 3D (PG) RealD 3D: 11:50-5:00-10:10
Mission: Impossible - Ghost Protocol (PG-13) Digital Presentation: (I) 11:45-2:55-6:10-9:25
Alvin and the Chipmunks: Chipwrecked (G) Digital Presentation: (I) 10:00-12:25-2:50-5:30-8:00-10:30
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The Sitter (R) Digital Presentation: 10:50-1:05-3:30-5:45-8:05-10:30
Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows (PG-13) Digital Presentation: (I) 9:15-12:10-3:20-6:30-9:40
Mission: Impossible - Ghost Protocol: The IMAX Experience (PG-13) IMAX: (I) 4:00-7:10-10:25
The Adventures of Tintin: An IMAX 3D Experience (PG) IMAX 3D: (I) 10:25-1:15
The Adventures of Tintin 3D (PG) RealD 3D: (I) 11:30-2:20-5:05-7:50-10:35
The Descendants (R) AMC INDEPENDENT: 9:40-12:20-3:10-6:00-8:50-11:35
The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo (R) CC/DVS-Closed Captions & Descriptive Video: (I) 11:35-3:05-6:40-10:20
Arthur Christmas (PG) Digital Presentation: 9:20-2:30-7:35
Young Adult (R) (I) 9:25-12:00-2:25-4:50-7:20-9:50-12:10
J. Edgar (R) 11:00AM
The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo (R) Digital Presentation: (I) 9:35-1:10-4:45-8:20-11:55
Mission: Impossible - Ghost Protocol (PG-13) (I) 10:30-1:40-4:55-8:10-11:25
Alvin and the Chipmunks: Chipwrecked (G) (I) 11:25-1:55-4:25-

6:50-9:15-11:45
New Year's Eve (PG-13) 11:20-2:15-5:10-7:55-10:50
We Bought a Zoo (PG) (I) 9:10-10:20-12:05-1:30-3:15-4:35-6:20-7:40-9:20-10:45-12:15
Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows (PG-13) (I) 10:10-1:20-2:10-4:20-5:20-7:30-8:30-10:30-11:40
The Muppets (PG) 9:45-12:30-3:25-6:05-8:55-11:30

Alexandria Old Town Theater
815 1/2 King St. <http://tickets.oldtowntheater.com/>

Mission: Impossible - Ghost Protocol (PG-13) (I) 2:30-5:00-7:30-10:00
The Adventures of Tintin (PG) (I) 3:20-5:30-7:50-10:00

Arlington Cinema 'N' Drafthouse
2903 Columbia Pike <http://www.arlingtondrafthouse.com/>

Home Alone (PG) 9:55
Drive (R) 7:20

Regal Ballston Common 12
671 N. Glebe Road www.regalcinemas.com

Young Adult (R) 12:40-3:05-5:30-8:10-10:35
The Descendants (R) 12:20-2:00-4:50-7:35-10:25
The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo (R) (I) 11:00-1:00-2:30-3:00-3:30-4:30-6:00-6:30-7:00-8:00-9:30-10:00-10:30
Mission: Impossible - Ghost Protocol (PG-13) (I) 12:50-1:20-3:50-4:20-6:50-7:20-9:50-10:20
Alvin and the Chipmunks: Chipwrecked (G) (I) 11:30-12:30-1:50-2:50-4:00-5:00-6:30-7:30-8:50-9:40
The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn - Part 1 (PG-13) 12:55-6:20
The Sitter (R) 12:45-4:05-9:20

Regal Kingstowne 16
5910 Kingstowne Towne Center

Hugo 3D (PG) RealD 3D: (I) 2:55-6:15-9:05
The Descendants (R) CC-Open Caption: 12:30
Young Adult (R) 12:05-2:35-4:55-7:15-9:35
The Descendants (R) 3:50-6:55-9:40
The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo (R) (I) 11:25-12:25-2:45-3:45-6:10-7:10-9:30-10:30
Hugo (PG) 11:55AM
Arthur Christmas (PG) 11:30-2:00-4:25
The Adventures of Tintin (PG) 11:45-12:45-2:15-4:45-7:20-9:55
Mission: Impossible - Ghost Protocol (PG-13) (I) 11:00-1:55-3:15-4:50-6:30-7:45-9:25-10:40
Alvin and the Chipmunks: Chipwrecked (G) (I) 11:05-12:10-1:15-2:20-3:25-4:30-5:35-6:40-8:00-8:55-10:10
The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn - Part 1 (PG-13) 1:00
New Year's Eve (PG-13) 4:05-7:00-9:45
We Bought a Zoo (PG) 11:00-1:45-4:35-7:30-10:20
The Muppets (PG) 11:50-2:25-5:05-7:40-10:15
The Sitter (R) 6:50-9:00
Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows (PG-13) (I) 11:20-12:20-2:10-3:10-5:00-6:25-7:50-9:15-10:40

Regal Potomac Yard 16
3575 Jefferson Davis Highway www.regalcinemas.com

Alvin and the Chipmunks: Chipwrecked (G) CC-Open Caption: (I) 11:25-4:10
Hugo 3D (PG) RealD 3D: (I) 12:15-6:15-9:05
The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo (R) (I) 11:30-12:00-2:30-3:00-3:30-6:05-6:30-7:00-9:30-10:00-10:25
Hugo (PG) 3:15
Arthur Christmas (PG) 11:50AM
The Adventures of Tintin (PG) 11:05-11:35-2:05-4:40-7:10-9:40-12:00
Mission: Impossible - Ghost Protocol (PG-13) (I) 11:15-12:50-1:25-2:10-3:40-5:20-5:10-6:50-7:30-8:10-9:50-10:35-11:15-11:50
Alvin and the Chipmunks: Chipwrecked (G) (I) 1:00-1:50-3:20-5:30-6:35-9:00-11:10
New Year's Eve (PG-13) 12:35-3:35-6:20-9:15-12:00
The Sitter (R) 8:00-10:10-12:00
The Muppets (PG) 11:10-1:30-3:55-6:25-9:10
We Bought a Zoo (PG) 11:00-1:40-4:30-7:20-10:20
Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows (PG-13) (I) 11:20-12:40-1:10-2:20-4:00-4:45-5:20-7:05-7:45-8:15-10:05-10:45-11:20

TV weekend **lookout**

Lost in Translation

NPR's 'Wait Wait ... Don't Tell Me!' moves to the small screen

Game Shows

FRI 8:00 For some, a co-production of the BBC and NPR could be a dream come true. Just don't call it good television. The NPR game show-news quiz "Wait Wait ... Don't Tell Me!" (BBC America) makes its TV debut with a cheeky roundup of the big news stories of 2011.

For the uninitiated, "Wait" features a panel of three "experts" who answer questions about news events with jokey asides. Each talent plays for charity, so the competition is good-natured and focused more on wisecracks than scoring points. Paula Poundstone, a comedian who is a regular on the radio



Longtime "Wait Wait ... Don't Tell Me!" host Peter Sagal also mans the TV version.

series, acts generally befuddled but eventually gets things right in the end. Carl Kasell, an NPR regular with a distinguished voice, is the official judge and scorekeeper. Peter Sagal, also blessed with a great voice, is your host.

Some things just work better without pictures. And sometimes radio shows that seem distracting and amusing when you're caught

in traffic can seem boring and static when you have a hundred other things to watch.

"Wait" will certainly not break this trend. One of the virtues of "Wait" is that during its weekly news roundup, the banter is current and fresh. This year-ender, taped three weeks ago, already is as stale as a Herman Cain joke.

KEVIN MCDONOUGH (UNIVERSAL UCLICK)

Best Bets



Chuck (NBC) Chuck (Zachary Levi, left) and Sarah discover who is trying to destroy Carmichael Industries, while back on the home front, Ellie's Christmas plans come undone. A computer virus threatens to ruin Christmas at Buy More, where the team must fend off a lot of very angry customers.

FRI 8:00 **It's a Wonderful Life** (NBC) George Bailey defers one big dream after another to stay home, marry a local girl and run the family business. Facing financial ruin, he's pulled from suicidal despair by an angel who shows him what a terrible place the world would be if he'd never lived.

SAT 10:00 **A Diva's Christmas Carol** (LIFE) Vanessa Williams has the Scrooge role in this 2000 Dickens adaptation, playing Ebony, a singer with a big ego. Of course, that leaves no room in her soul for Christmas spirit until a few ghostly visitors arrive to show her the error of her ways.

SUN 8:00 **Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas** (ABC) Since it first aired in 1966, this adaptation has evolved into an annual holiday viewing tradition. Chuck Jones directed this story about a green-skinned grouch who sets out to spoil Christmas for the citizens of Whoville. (TRIBUNE MEDIA)



Film



'Christmas' Day

"You'll shoot your eye out!" Peter Billingsley, above, stars in 1983's "A Christmas Story" (Sat., 8 p.m., TBS), as the little boy who yearns to find a Red Ryder BB gun under the Christmas tree. Not just a Christmas story, it's about parents, little brothers, bullies, decoder rings, double-dog dares and, most of all, the workings of a youthful mind. The film will repeat — on a loop — for 24 hours after this airing. (TM)

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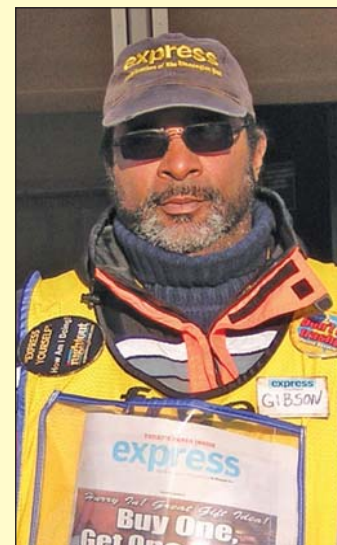
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ROOMMATES

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utilities included. Call 301-343-6198

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SILVER SPRING/GLENMONT- Male preferred, N/S,
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microwave, CATV, wireless net. \$150/wk. 301-
775-0019

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tained 703-309-0193 craigwaive@yahoo.com

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cond, 82k miles, Sterling Silver/Black leather,
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Ford 2001 E350 Super Duty — XL Wagon,
\$3500, Excellent cond, 234k mi, Gray int, Blue
ext, 5 dr, Lthr int, Cass, Buckets, 240-353-4038

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good cond, 48k mi, Beige lthr int, Titanium
ext, 4 dr, all Pwr, mrrf, 202-459-8549

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AVERY JESSUP
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“All I want for Christmas is for the bizarre trickle of ‘Prometheus’ marketing (teaser trailers for teaser trailers? seriously?) to stop and for everyone to stop ruminating on how Ridley Scott’s latest fits into the ‘Alien’ universe. It’s clearly a prequel, but that could just be the eggnog talking.”

— **FILMSCHOOLREJECTS.COM** thinks that “Prometheus” and its story line are obviously set in a time frame directly ahead of Scott’s 1979 sci-fi classic, “Alien.”

“Is it weird my 1st thought on Kim Jong Il dying is what happens on [‘30 Rock’]? Is Avery an assassin? I think so.”

— **@LACEY1211** isn’t quite sure how the NBC show plans to go forward with its story line in which character Jack Donaghy’s wife, Avery, is in North Korea after being kidnapped and forced to serve as a propaganda mouthpiece for Kim Jong Il’s regime.

“It is ridiculous to say that the NBA has the power to control the NFL, but it is interesting how the Christmas Day nationally televised football game between the Packers and Bears has fallen to almost complete irrelevancy.”

— **LEZ-BE-HONEST.COM** offers up some conspiracy theories as to why the NBA seems to have no direct programming competition on Christmas Day, when the league has six nationally televised games scheduled.

“An enterprising ‘Star Wars’ fan made herself some Princess Leia hair headphones and is wondering if she should try and sell them. Of course, she isn’t the first person to have this idea. ... Mel Brooks is way ahead of everyone.”

— **FASHIONABLYGEEK.COM** paid homage to the 1987 movie “Spaceballs” after seeing a Reddit.com user post a picture of her supposed invention.

“There are few things worse than being fired on your birthday, but getting fired three days before Christmas AND on your birthday has to be a pretty rough thing. Pour one out for Big Tigger.”

— **TOM BRIDGE AT WELOVEDC.COM** feels bad for radio/TV personality Big Tigger, who was let go Thursday as host of 95.5 WPGC-FM’s morning show.



We’re on this ride together.

Let’s keep it clean.

Please recycle this paper.



Puzzles

Horoscope

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

Just when you thought that you were out of the woods, you have to deal with an issue that takes you completely by surprise.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

You must be willing to see all there is to see from every direction — which may seem impossible, but you can do it.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

What you want is closer than you think, though you may have to jump through a few hoops before you can claim it as your own.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

Many discoveries lie ahead of you, and those you make will matter a great deal as you try to solve a personal mystery.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

You can bet that there will be many people looking over your shoulder to see whether what you claim to be doing is really the truth.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

You may be suffering from a private anguish at this time — but you may also be making it worse than it actually is. Don't be over-indulgent.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)

What nature has to offer can be quite important to you throughout the day. Seek a way out of a situation you did not ask for.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

You can prove quite effective in a variety of endeavors, but the one that surprises you and others most will be the last you attempt.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

You must be willing to put more energy into the planning phase of an endeavor; the more detailed you can be, the better.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

Take care that you don't abandon a project that is actually quite important to you, for you will not be able to go back to it.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

You may be called upon to come between two warring factions — but the danger to you and yours is likely to be minimal. You can do it.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

Focus on all the alternatives you have available to you, even as you struggle with an activity that doesn't come naturally.

Scrabble Grams

PAR SCORE 145-155, BEST SCORE 225

A ₁	U ₁	R ₁	R ₁	G ₂	L ₁	B ₃

RACK 1

A ₁	O ₁	U ₁	L ₁	R ₁	P ₃	P ₃

2nd Letter Double

RACK 2

A ₁	I ₁	U ₁	N ₁	F ₄	F ₄	M ₃

RACK 3

A ₁	U ₁	F ₄	R ₁	D ₂	T ₁	P ₃

Triple Word Score

RACK 4

Yesterday's Solution

G ₂	A ₁	L ₁	L ₁	O ₁	W ₄	S ₁	RACK 1 =	83
B ₃	R ₁	E ₁	A ₁	T ₁	H ₄	E ₁	RACK 2 =	62
R ₁	O ₁	O ₁	M ₃	E ₁	R ₁		RACK 3 =	8
W ₄	A ₁	R ₁	T ₁	H ₄	O ₁	G ₂	RACK 4 =	68
PAR SCORE 150-160								TOTAL 221

FOUR RACK TOTAL

Make a 2-7 letter word from the letters in each row. Add points of each word using scoring directions at right. 7-letter words get a 50-point bonus. Blank tiles used as any letter have no point value. Scrabble is a trademark of Hasbro in the U.S. and Canada.

Sudoku

DIFFICULT

				9		7		5
					8	4		2
					2			1
9			5				1	8
		1				2		
4	3				1			9
5			8					
7		8	9					
1		4		3				

Yesterday's Solution

8	1	5	2	9	3	6	7	4
3	2	7	5	6	4	8	1	9
6	4	9	8	1	7	2	3	5
4	3	1	7	5	2	9	8	6
9	8	2	4	3	6	7	5	1
5	7	6	9	8	1	4	2	3
1	5	8	6	7	9	3	4	2
2	6	3	1	4	8	5	9	7
7	9	4	3	2	5	1	6	8

Need more Sudolku?

Find another puzzle in the Comics section of The Post every Sunday and in the Style section Monday through Saturday.

© PUZZLES BY PAPPOCOM

Comics

FIND MORE COMICS AT EXPRESSNIGHTOUT.COM

POOCH CAFE | PAUL GILLIGAN



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE | STEPHAN PASTIS



Forecast

56 | **37**

Today: Breezy today with some sun returning. Patchy clouds tonight.

49 | **35**

Tomorrow: Intervals of clouds and sun tomorrow. Mostly clear tomorrow night.

Looking Ahead

SUN **MON** **TUE**
51 | **33** **47** | **32** **50** | **34**

Sun and Moon

Sunrise today: 7:24 a.m.
Sunset today: 4:50 p.m.
Moonrise today: 6:11 a.m.
Moonset today: 3:57 p.m.

Almanac

Normal high: 45
Record high: 72
Normal low: 31
Record low: 3

FORECAST BY ACCUWEATHER.COM ©2009

GILLED TO THE BRIM

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
14					15						16			
17				18							19			
20									21	22				
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	27	28	29			30			31			32	33	34
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43				44					45	46				
47				48				49		50				
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63					64	65	66							
67					68						69			
70					71						72			

DIFFICULT

[illegible][illegible]

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of Circulations

People



DEFENSIVE 'We're Fine With Our Living Arrangement, Just Not With Anyone Judging It'

Debra Messing and Daniel Zelman are indeed separated, yet are indeed living still living together with their 7-year-old son, Messing's rep said in a statement: They plan to "gradually transition into a new living situation. They have no immediate plans for divorce." The couple announced their split Tuesday. (EXPRESS)

BABIES Celebrities, Sync Your Biological Clocks

Nick and Vanessa Lachey told People.com that they're not rushing to have children. "I don't think there's necessarily any timetable for it," Nick said. "We're definitely excited about being parents at some point, but I think whenever that happens, we'll embrace it and be excited for it." He also said the couple will be throwing an ugly sweater party. (EXPRESS)



ROGER NISBY/GETTY IMAGES

BUT JESSICA SIMPSON IS PREGNANT!
HOW CAN YOU NOT WANT BABIES NOW?

Victims



Love Not a Fan Of Subjectivity

Courtney Love is upset that her landlord wants to evict her for altering the inside of the townhouse she's renting. "Having a landlady tell you your Prella, \$2,000-a-yard fabric... is 'destructive' is totally weird," Love wrote on XoJane.com. "My taste is artful and femme, but it's excellent." (EXPRESS)



TIFFS Catch and Release

Finnish police say they detained Adam Lambert after he assaulted people who tried to break up a fight between him and his boyfriend, "Finnish Big Brother" star Sauli Koskinen, in Helsinki. The fight spread from a popular gay bar early Thursday into the street, where Lambert was suspected of hitting two people who tried to break it up. Koskinen also was held for questioning. Neither man was charged. (AP)

"My absolute must-have is a really rich and vibrant red lipstick. ... Red lipstick is the cure-all for everything."



— SCARLETT JOHANSSON ALSO TOLD STYLE.COM THAT SHE GIVES HERSELF FACIALS WITH MANUKA HONEY AND FEELS "MOST LIKE MYSELF WHEN I'M BLONDE."



"China" is the name of our giant bird that lays clothes instead of eggs."

LEGAL TEAMS Who Has Better Lawyers, Star or the Kardashians? This Is Gonna Be Close.

The Kardashian family wants to sue those parties who accused them of using sweatshop labor to manufacture their clothing lines. In their crosshairs, TMZ.com speculates: the Institute for Global Labour and Human Rights' Charles Kernaghan, who says he didn't visit the factories implicated; and Star magazine, which sources say Kris Jenner wants to sue for libel. (EXPRESS)

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